LRT news

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LRT news

on the Internet!

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Portland, Oregon, November 16–18, 2003
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LRT News is published intermittently by the Transportation Research Board to disseminate information on new developments in light rail transit planning, technology, and operations. The newsletter also reports on new studies, completed research, and current literature. The publication of *LRT News* is made possible through funding under the Technical Assistance Program of the Federal Transit Administration. Donald O. Eisele, editor. John W. Schumann, Chairman, TRB Committee on Light Rail Transit. Peter L. Shaw, TRB staff. Submit news items to *LRT News,* Transportation Research Board, 500 Fifth Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001, telephone 202-334-2966. ISSN 0162-8429.

TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD
OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

CORDLESS LRT COMES TO USA

Southern New Jersey Light Rail Set to Open This Fall

Beginning this fall, new light rail service will be offered along New Jersey's Delaware River coastline.

Serving multiple residential, employment, commercial, and recreational destinations, the Southern New Jersey Light Rail Transit System (SNJLRTS) will operate about 34 miles between Trenton and Camden. The alignment will include a combination of street running, an exclusive light rail section, a freight-shared section, and portions of single- and double-track operations. The line serves 20 station stops and travels through 19 municipalities and 3 counties. The line, formerly owned by Conrail, is known also as the Bordentown Secondary Line.

The Southern New Jersey Rail Group, which includes Bechtel Group and Bombardier, has been contracted to design, build, operate, and maintain the entire system. A 50,000-square-foot facility in Camden will serve as the heart of the operation. The building will include a control, communications, and dispatch center as well as facilities for maintenance, training, storage, and crews. In Trenton, there also will be a layover facility to store vehicles.

The new system will play several key roles for the region, such as a catalyst for economic development and containment of urban sprawl. Among the destinations served by the system are the Tweeter Center and N.J. State Aquarium in Camden and the Trenton Sovereign Arena at State House in Trenton.

"The new light rail system bolsters Gov. James E. McGreevey's Smart Growth vision," said NJ TRANSIT Executive Director George D. Warrington. "At the same time, area residents gain a safe, affordable service and the region adds a valuable economic driver."

To encourage residents to change their travel habits, the light rail line also will be extremely affordable. Passengers will travel the entire length of the line for an introductory one-way fare of $1.10. About 3,300 parking spaces have been created for the system so customers can park and ride.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

SNJLRTS features diesel-powered light rail cars traveling over several alignments to serve 20 stations.

The SNJLRTS will use modern, diesel-powered light rail cars, offering a cost-effective solution to transit needs along the Delaware River. The Adtranz GTW 2/6 vehicles, which have been used in Europe for years, have clean-burning Mercedes-Benz diesel engines that meet or exceed the latest federal air quality standards. The vehicles have quieter engines than buses and commuter trains, because the propulsion module is housed in a specialty insulated power unit, further reducing noise levels. The state-of-the-art magnetic brake systems will enable additional braking capability, particularly in street-running operations.

The vehicle's fuel consumption is similar to a bus, even though the light rail car carries four times as many passengers. Each car seats about 90 passengers and has room for 100 standees. There is an on-board message system and racks for bicycles and luggage. The vehicles, which have low floors, are accessible and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The light rail vehicles are 102-feet long with four doors per car.

Revenue service is currently planned to operate between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. seven days a week. Headways are 15 minutes during peak periods and 30 minutes during off-peak periods.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

SNJLRTS follows the Bordentown Secondary Line, formerly owned by Conrail.

SNJLRTS also provides convenient connecting service to NJ TRANSIT trains and buses, Amtrak, SEPTA, and PATCO.

Fare payment will be enforced via a proof of payment system. The system will use ticket vending machines at all station stops, validators and random inspections by Fare Enforcement Officers.

NJ TRANSIT is the nation's largest statewide public transportation system providing bus, rail and light rail services for 752,600 daily trips on 238 bus routes, two light rail lines, and 11 commuter rail lines. It is the third largest transit system in the country—with 160 rail stations, 28 light rail stations, and more than 17,000 bus stops—linking major points in New Jersey, New York, and Philadelphia.

—Ken Hitchner

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

HOUSTON ON TARGET FOR 2004

First METRO Car Arrives with Police Escort

It's arrived! The first of Houston METRO's distinctive light rail vehicles—complete with sleek, polished silver exterior—arrived in April to METRO's Yard Shop facility. The rail car traveled on a flatbed truck from the Siemens Transportation Inc. plant in Sacramento, where it was assembled. METRO Police escorted the truck from San Antonio to Houston. It is the first of 18 METRORail cars that will operate on the 7.5-mile light rail line from downtown to south of Reliant Park. METRO immediately will begin testing the first car on its newly constructed 1.7-mile test track. Additional testing will take place on the entire line in advance of METRORail's debut on Jan. 1, 2004.

"The new METRORail vehicle is distinctive and was uniquely designed for Houston," said METRO President and CEO Shirley A. DeLibero. "Its futuristic design is like no other currently operating in the world."

The METRORail vehicles are 95 feet long, with seating for 72 passengers; seated and standing capacity is 200 people. Each car will be low-floor (level with the platform) for 70 percent of its length. Like METRO's bus fleet, METRORail will be 100 percent accessible. Every day the METRORail project is getting closer to completion. Road construction and track installation on the project are more than 90 percent completed.

—Maggi Stewart, Houston METRO

The first of Houston's light rail vehicles arrives for testing.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

LRT PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT TABLE

(As of March 2003)

FOCUS CITY[1]	IN CONCEPTUAL PLANNING	IN FINAL DESIGN	UNDER CONSTRUCTION	IN REVENUE OPERATION
AUSTIN	I	-	-	-
BALTIMORE	E	-	U	S
BOSTON	E	-	U	S
BUFFALO	E	-	-	I
CALGARY	E	-	-	S
CHARLOTTE	I	I	-	-
CINCINNATI	I	-	-	-
COLUMBUS	I	-	-	-
CLEVELAND	E	-	-	S
DALLAS	E	E	E	S
DENVER	E	E	E	S
EDMONTON	E	E	E	S
HOUSTON	-	-	I	-
JERSEY CITY	E	E	E	S
KANSAS CITY	I	-	-	-
LOUISVILLE	I	-	-	-
LOS ANGELES	E	E	E	S
MEMPHIS	E	E	E	I[2]
MIAMI	I	-	-	-
MILWAUKEE	I	-	-	-
MINNEAPOLIS	E	I	I	-
MONTREAL	I	-	-	-
NEW ORLEANS	E	-	E	S
NEW YORK	I	-	-	-
NEWARK	E	E	E	I
OTTAWA	I	-	-	-
PHILADELPHIA	-	-	U	S
PHOENIX	I	I	-	-
PITTSBURGH	E	-	U	S
PORTLAND	E	-	E	S
SACRAMENTO	E	-	E/U	S
ST. LOUIS	E	E	E	S
SALT LAKE CITY	E	E	E	S
SAN DIEGO	E	E	E	S
SAN FRANCISCO	E	E	E	S
SAN JOSE	E	E	E	S
SEATTLE[2]	S	-	-	I
TACOMA[3]	-	-	I	-
TORONTO	E	-	-	S
TOTALS	**36**	**15**	**22**	**24**

Legend: E = Expansion of existing facilities (extension, new route, added trackage, etc.)
I = Initial or basic one-corridor line
S = System (more than one corridor)
U = Upgrading of existing facilities (same basic route)

[1] The corridor or system may extend well beyond the boundaries of the named city into other cities or counties.
[2] The heritage trolley lines in these cities, which were built as a tourist attraction, have evolved to serve daily commuters as well. For that reason they have been included in this table.
[3] Eventually, this line will be connected with and absorbed into a regional system focused on Seattle.

This progress table is published periodically as a part of LRT NEWS. The content was reviewed and updated shortly before publication. Readers who have fresh information or who wish to comment on the table, please contact:

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ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

NINTH NATIONAL LRT CONFERENCE

November 16-18, 2003, Portland, Oregon— Ride MAX and the Portland Streetcar

The Transportation Research Board and the American Public Transportation Association are co-sponsoring the Ninth National Light Rail Transit Conference, to be held November 16–18, 2003 in Portland, Oregon. This is the latest in the series of periodic conferences begun in Philadelphia (1975) and most recently held in Dallas (2000). Now, join your colleagues for a stimulating three days on the Upper Left Coast (almost):

- Portland LRT and streetcar tours on Sunday, Nov. 16; and
- Sessions and presentations, Monday and Tuesday, Nov. 17 and 18.

Sunday tours are planned for morning and afternoon and will include TriMet's 33-mile East-West MAX from end-to-end, the Portland Streetcar line, a traveling seminar on transit oriented development (TOD), field inspection of the new Interstate MAX line, and specialty inspection tours covering the evolution of how Portland builds tracks in streets, the variety of traffic interface techniques, and MAX yards and shops—including TriMet's combined rail and bus central control facility.

Conference sessions will be held on Monday and Tuesday. In addition to opening and closing general sessions, there will be a Portland poster session and seven sets of concurrent technical sessions, each set pairing planning- and engineering-oriented topics. Prospective authors submitted nearly 100 abstracts last year and are now preparing their papers and presentations. Learn about LRT progress throughout North America and overseas in the following areas: planning, operations, low-floor LRVs, TOD, demand forecasting, LRT traffic engineering, grade crossings and shared corridors, electrification issues, civil design for LRT, station area developments, project management, LRT and other modes, and updates on active projects.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

APTA and TRB National LRT Conferences are a great learning tool for practitioners building and operating LRT systems and for people planning LRT in places seeking to emulate the success of the nearly 30 North American cities already operating LRT and streetcars—and they are fun!

You've heard the hype, you've read about Portland's multiple LRT line openings. Join us and see what has been accomplished in one of America's most active cities in developing the new generation of LRT systems!

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Intercity Rail Passenger Systems Update

http://gulliver.trb.org/publications/irps/irps_dec_2001.pdf (December 2001)

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