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Welcome to *Transport Innovator*, a free newsletter dedicated to sharing information about innovative, cost-effective transportation solutions. We welcome comments and ideas for future stories. Please feel free to contact us – we look forward to hearing from you. Free subscriptions are available at www.gobrt.org

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Transport News from the United States

Internet may be offered on San Francisco-area buses

AC Transit may provide free wireless internet service on half of its bus fleet. The service will allow riders with laptops to read e-mail and surf the web, although large files and videos will be prohibited. While slower than cable modem, the service will be faster than dial up and will offer riders better use of their travel time. A Bay Area Air Quality Management District grant would cover all costs. Service could be available as early as Fall 2005.

Source: Mercury News, July 5, 2005
For more information [click here](#) (AC Transit)

Kansas City to debut new MAX line in July



The Kansas City Area Transportation Authority will initiate service of its new MAX bus line on July 24, 2005. The line will connect downtown Kansas City, Missouri to River Market. MAX will utilize several advanced technologies including signal priority and real-time passenger information systems. Twelve new 40-foot Gillig buses have been purchased for the route. The buses will

operate in exclusive bus lanes along a 3.5 mile portion of the route. A 10-minute time savings is expected over previous bus service.

Source: Kansas City Area Transportation Authority
For more information [click here](#) (KCATA)

Los Angeles launches new Big Blue Bus, Metro Rapid lines



The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) will open three new lines for service on July 27. Big Blue Bus' new Rapid 3 line will serve the Lincoln Corridor, an 8-mile, densely populated stretch along Lincoln Boulevard that experiences high transit ridership. The route will connect downtown Santa Monica to Los Angeles International Airport and Metro Green Line light rail station, passing through Venice, Playa Vista and

Marina del Rey. Rapid 3 will use low-floor, liquified natural gas vehicles manufactured by North American Bus Industries (NABI). Buses will initially operate in mixed traffic utilizing signal priority and 15 minute headways.

The new Beverly Metro Rapid line will operate on an 11.6 mile route between downtown Los Angeles and Beverly Hills, offering connections to the Metro Red and Blue lines. The Fairfax Metro Rapid line will run 6.7 miles from the Metro Red Line Hollywood/Vine subway station with the West LA Transit Center. Both will operate on 10-15 minute peak headways. The low floor buses will be equipped with GPS to enable real-time passenger information technology. Transit signal priority, which has improved journey time by 25% on the previous Rapid routes, will be also used on these routes.

These new openings mark the halfway point of LACMTA's Rapid bus line development, with 14 of the planned 28 routes now operational. The initial Rapid bus lines were opened in 2000, with each new opening leading to a 15 to 40 percent increase in ridership. Full implementation of the Rapid system is planned by 2008. An upgrade to fully-featured bus rapid transit service is planned along the Wilshire-Whittier Metro Rapid Bus corridor.

*Source: Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
For more information [click here](#) (LACMTA)*

Houston adds additional BRT to transit plan

Houston Metro's new transit plan will substitute bus rapid transit (BRT) for light rail during the initial development phase of several corridors. The previous plan had included 22 miles of light rail, which has now been reduced to 8.3 miles. The new plan adds 47 miles of bus service, referred to by Metro as bus rapid transit. Twenty-eight miles of commuter rail were also added. These changes reduce costs and make the plan more competitive for federal funding, according to officials. Preliminary engineering will begin in 2005 and construction is slated to start in 2007.

*Source: Houston Metro; Houston Chronicle, June 14, 2005
For more information [click here](#) (Houston Metro) or [click here](#) (Houston Chronicle)*

New Orleans to buy hybrid buses

New Orleans' Regional Transit Authority (RTA) plans to purchase four diesel-electric hybrid buses, and may add 75 more in 2006 as it begins to replace its aging bus fleet. Transit officials had ruled out the purchase of natural gas-propelled buses due to the need to construct a special fueling station. RTA's manager anticipates that increased fuel efficiency will offset the higher hybrid purchase price. The mayor supports the plan as part of an overall city strategy to reduce carbon emissions.

*Source: New Orleans Times-Picayune, May 23, 2005
For more information [click here](#) (Times Picayune)*

Las Vegas monorail extension replaced by rapid bus service



A trouble-plagued monorail extension has been replaced by plans to open a new MAX rapid bus line in downtown Las Vegas. The route will operate between the Sahara Hotel monorail stop and Fremont Street. Federal funding will be diverted from the monorail project to finance construction of the bus lanes and stations. MAX currently operates a 7.6 mile line on semi-dedicated lanes along the Las Vegas North Corridor and has experienced a 30 percent increase in ridership since the line's opening in June 2004. Two additional MAX routes are planned and four more routes are under consideration.

*Source: Las Vegas Review-Journal, May 20, 2005
For more information [click here](#) (Review-Journal)*

Los Angeles buses offer television broadcasts

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority is implementing television service on its fleet of Metro buses. Video monitors will broadcast passenger information, stop announcements, broadcast news, sports, stock quotes and vintage television. Broadcast provider Transit TV will pay all system costs. Advertising will take up a quarter of the broadcast time and Metro will share in the advertising revenues, expected to be about \$100,000 year.

Source: Passenger Transport, July 11, 2005

California's Hydrogen Highway receives funding

In order to reduce dependence on foreign oil and reduce tailpipe emissions, the State of California recently approved \$6.5 million in funding for the Hydrogen Highway Project to build a series of hydrogen fueling stations every 20 miles along state roadways. The plan also provides financial incentives to lease non-polluting hydrogen fuel cell cars and buses. Currently there are 16 fueling stations and 95 fuel cell vehicles operating within the state. The new money will be used to support construction of three new hydrogen fueling stations and additional fuel cell car or bus leases.

Source: New Fuels & Vehicles, July 8, 2005
For more information [click here](#) (Hydrogen Highway)

Silver Line BRT service begins to Boston's Logan Airport

Revenue service along Phase III of Boston's Silver Line bus rapid transit—an expansion from the Waterfront to Logan International Airport—began on June 1, 2005. The route travels by tunnel under the Fort Point Channel and delivers passengers to each of the airport's terminals. Fares range from \$0.90 to \$1.25 with an endpoint-to-endpoint travel time of 18 to 25 minutes. Up to 2,000 passengers a day have taken advantage of the service; the line can accommodate 3,500 passengers a day. Silver Line's Phase 1, a bus lane from Dudley Square to Downtown Crossing retail area, opened for service in 2002 and the Phase 2 Waterfront underground tunnel began service in December 2004.

Source: Boston Herald, July 7, 2005
For more information [click here](#) (Boston Globe)

Oregon DOT to begin mileage tax test

Oregon's Department of Transportation will begin a federally-funded mileage taxation pilot project in Fall 2005. The first project of its kind in the US, the mileage tax could potentially replace the state's current tax levy on fuel. During the initial 60-day test, 20 volunteer vehicles equipped with GPS will fill their tanks at either of two filling stations equipped with technology to download vehicle mileage. No location data will be recorded, only the total miles traveled in- and out-of-state (future taxes would be imposed only on in-state travel). A second evaluation in Spring 2006 will use 280 vehicles to evaluate various pricing schemes.

Source: Corvallis Gazette-Times, June 6, 2005
For more information [click here](#) (Corvallis Gazette-Times)

Cleveland BRT construction experiences cost over-runs

Cleveland's Silver Line bus rapid transit (BRT) system construction must remain on budget or the city will risk the loss of \$80 million in federal funding, according to the Federal Transportation Administration. The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA) found that the \$188 million project was projected to exceed planned costs by five percent. RTA was able to calculate \$10 million in cost savings to keep the project within the financial target. When complete, the low-floor Silver Line buses will operate on a two-lane median dedicated busway along a portion of the route. Technology systems will include traffic signal priority, precision docking, off-board fare collection and real-time passenger information systems. The project is being funded by the FTA, city of Cleveland, state of Ohio and RTA. Revenue service is slated to begin in 2008.

*Source: The Plain Dealer, July 15, 2005
For more information [click here](#) (cleveland.com)*

New Bay-area bus service pre-cursor to BRT

In early July 2005, California's Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority implemented enhanced bus service along a new line, Rapid 522. Serving as a precursor to bus rapid transit, the reduced-stop line features bus signal priority, queue jump lanes and frequent service. New low floor buses identify the specialized service with a unique blue, red and white color wrap. Phase II improvements will include dedicated lanes, higher capacity vehicles, off-board fare collection, real-time passenger information systems, additional signal priority and rail-like stations. Partial funding assistance was provided by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's Transportation Fund for Clean Air. The Transportation Authority also operates Rapid 22, another reduced-stop route with service enhancements.

*Source: Santa Clara Valley Transit Authority
For more information [click here](#) (Santa Clara Valley Transit Authority)*

Transport News from Around the World

Mexico City opens dedicated busway lanes

Mexico City's new Metrobus bus rapid transit initiated service in late June 2005. Operating in dedicated median bus lanes, the system features 36 stations and 90 articulated multi-door Volvo buses that replace several hundred older, polluting private minibuses and standard-size public transit buses. The dedicated lanes are anticipated to reduce travel time by as much as one hour from the typical two-hour commute on the 12-mile route. About 300,000 passengers a day took advantage of the initial free fares. Thirty cent fares were implemented in mid-July, reducing ridership to 270,000—still slightly exceeding the planned capacity (the system was designed to accommodate 250,000 daily riders). A preliminary survey has shown that 75% of passengers feel that the new system is better than the prior minibus service. The total system cost was \$50 million, with financing provided by the World Bank.

*Source: Christian Science Monitor, June 24, 2005 and New York Times, July 15, 2005.
For more information [click here](#) (Christian Science Monitor) or [click here](#) (New York Times)*

Seoul buses experience problems

Seoul, Korea's 20 Italian-made Iveco articulated buses may be phased out of service due to engine break downs and customer complaints. The 140-passenger buses were added to the transit system in September 2004, with a total of 200 articulated buses to be purchased from Iveco by the opening of a planned bus rapid transit system in 2008. Accidents, engine and maintenance troubles have plagued the system. Customers have also complained about the unfamiliar European design and computer-driven technology, such as climate control systems that cannot be overridden by the operator. The city may switch to a new articulated bus recently introduced by Korean automaker Hyundai.

Source: The Korea Times, July 12, 2005

UK to fund road pricing pilot projects

To aid in developing a national road pricing strategy the UK government is soliciting local and regional proposals to test various road pricing schemes. The government will initially make \$31 million/year in funding available for pilot programs between 2005 and 2008. Funding could eventually increase to as much as \$350 million/year. The road pricing system would move the UK away from fuel taxes—which comprise more than 70% of the total cost of gas—as well as improve reliability of travel times. The pilot programs will test various technologies to gather information on distance, place and time of travel, determine appropriate pricing levels and evaluate methods to safeguard privacy.

*Source: UK Department for Transport
For more information [click here](#) (UK Department of Transport)*

Vancouver's Transportation Authority receives award

The Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority has received a FCM-CH2M HILL Sustainable Community Award for a successful project targeting college students. The award recognized the Authority's implementation of a universal "U-Pass", new bus routes and increased service levels, all of which helped to make transit the primary mode of travel for students at two of Vancouver's major universities. As a result of this program an estimated 21,000 tons of greenhouse gases have been eliminated and traffic decreased by about 10 percent.

*Source: Canadian NewsWire Group
For more information [click here](#) (Canadian NewsWire Group)*

Bus lanes receive priority in Auckland

Bus lanes were implemented in June 2005 along several city streets in Auckland, New Zealand's central business district. The new bus lanes increase the importance of public transit in the city. Richard Simpson, chairman of the city council's Transport and Urban Linkages Committee, states that, "...people traveling by bus are our priority in these streets, over one person traveling in a car." The bus lanes are reserved for transit during the peak morning and evening travel hours on weekdays.

*Source: Scoop Independent
For more information [click here](#) (Auckland City Council)*

Fuel cell-hybrid bus prototype shown in Germany



Germany's Fraunhofer Institute debuted its prototype AutoTram vehicle in April 2005. The fuel cell-diesel hybrid tram operates on city streets using rubber tires and does not require any specialized equipment such as

guide wheels, tracks or wires. The modular bus seat up to 300 passengers and incorporates features such as optical guidance, all-wheel steering and multiple-redundancy safety components. Electric power is provided by an 80 kW Ballard fuel cell. The purchase and operating cost are not anticipated to be much greater than traditional articulated buses.

Source: Fraunhofer Institute

For more information [click here](#) (Fraunhofer Institute AutoTram fact sheet)

Canadian government sponsors Commuter Challenge 2005

Winners have been announced in the 2005 Commuter Challenge, an annual friendly competition between communities sponsored by the Canadian government. The Challenge encourages the use of sustainable transport during Environment Week, with participants logging on to the Challenge website to record distance traveled using public transit, cycling, walking, skating and carpooling, or travel eliminated through telecommuting. Over 2 million miles of sustainable travel were recorded during the week. Estimated air pollution savings included 14,864 grams of fine particulate matter, 3.5 million grams of nitrogen oxides and 730,000 kilograms of carbon dioxide equivalent.

Source: Commuter Challenge

For more information [click here](#) (Commuter Challenge)

Clean transit coming to Beijing

Chinese government officials announced in early July that 90% of Beijing's public buses and 70% of cabs will use clean fuel, electric or electric-hybrid propulsion technology by the 2008 Olympic Games. In order to accomplish this goal, the city will need to introduce 18,000 clean vehicles, including 1,000 zero emission vehicles. Currently 20 electric buses are in service in Beijing. Three DaimlerChrysler fuel cell buses will be delivered to China in September 2005. With growing air quality problems and one of the fastest growing rates of auto ownership in the world, the Chinese government has invested in transportation research and development and is partnering with industry and academia to encourage the development of a clean vehicle industry. Officials estimate that tailpipe emissions will account for 79 percent of the country's air pollution in 2005.

Source: Beijing International, July 9, 2005

For more information [click here](#) (Beijing International)