

# TRANSPORT INNOVATOR

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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](http://www.gobrt.org)

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## Editorial

Former US Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta said that “bus rapid transit gives communities the best bang for their buck when it comes to investing in transit.” It seems that cities are starting heed his advice.

Last year, there were only two BRT projects in the Federal Transit Administration’s annual report on the “New Starts” program, the major federal program for funding new transit projects. This year, there are ten.

Some of the increase is due to the inclusion of “small starts” projects in this year’s report, a category that was not included last year. The small starts funding category was created expressly for low-cost dedicated guideway projects like BRT. Even if these are factored out, six BRT projects remain, three times as many as last year.

Why the huge growth in BRT? One reason is that the demand for new federal transit funding is increasing while the supply of funding is relatively flat. This creates greater competition for funding, requiring cities to propose more cost-effective projects.

Another reason may be that cities are starting to appreciate the performance advantages of BRT over costlier rail projects. For example, Los Angeles is seeking \$16.68 million in federal funding to expand its Metro Rapid bus system. As a result of this investment, the FTA projects 123,100 daily boardings and 40,000 daily new transit riders in 2008.

By contrast, Virginia is seeking \$900 million in federal funding to expand Washington’s Metrorail system deep into the suburbs. As a result of this investment, the FTA projects 85,700 daily boardings and only 18,400 daily new transit riders, but not until 2030.

Downtown Los Angeles and the Northern Virginia suburbs are very different environments and have very different demographics and cultures. Nevertheless, the performance disparity is striking. Each new rider attracted to transit in Los Angeles will cost the federal government \$417, while each new rider attracted to transit in Northern Virginia will cost the federal government roughly \$49,000. Presumably, this is what Secretary Mineta had in mind when he said that BRT offers the best bang for the buck.

## U.S. Regulatory Alert

On February 12, the Federal Transit Administration released its proposed guidance on New Starts and Small Starts policies and procedures. FTA is soliciting comments, which must be received by March 14, 2007. FTA expects to issue the final guidance in early 2008.

To download the proposed guidance, go to <http://dms.dot.gov/reports/fr.htm> and scroll down to find document number FTA-2007-27172.

You can find more information about New Starts and Small Starts guidance, as well as FTA’s rulemaking process, at the FTA website: [www.fta.dot.gov](http://www.fta.dot.gov)

## Guest Column

### **First BRT in Africa? Johannesburg Makes the Running**

*By Paul Browning*

The Nov/Dec issue of Transport Innovator included the news that the city of Johannesburg, South Africa had approved the construction of a BRT network.

The first phase is due to be completed by April 2009. The system will use 18m articulated vehicles running from 5:00 am to midnight. The city's goal is to eventually have the bus routes accessible to 85% of the city's population.

This will almost certainly be the first BRT system in Africa. A basic system has been proposed for Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania, but progress there appears to be very slow. And in South Africa itself, a Cape Town BRT line has been planned since 2003, but it has now been downgraded to little more than a strategic bus route with priority measures.

The Johannesburg initiative received its impetus from two separate events. The first was the decision by the International Football Federation (FIFA) to award South Africa the hosting of the 2010 World Cup international soccer championship. As one of the host cities, Johannesburg is looking to enhance public transport for the hundreds of thousands of visitors expected and, in so doing, leave a legacy for the resident population.

The second event was the appointment of City Councillor Rehana Moosajee as the council member for transport in April 2006. Among other things, she led a team of city officials and transport operators to Bogotá, Colombia and Quito, Ecuador to see BRT in action. By October, a basic plan for BRT had been completed, which Moosajee piloted through the city council. The final plan was approved in November.

As this article is being written, detailed implementation planning is about to begin, with construction scheduled to start in January 2008. By any world standard, this is remarkable progress. For South Africa's public sector, it is like greased lightning.

Two things might inhibit the pace of construction and implementation.

The first is the reaction of the car commuter to the perception that limited road space is being taken for exclusive use by buses. This is exacerbated by the fact that construction is starting on a new heavy rail system, causing congestion and frustration. BRT may catch some of the backlash.

The second, and potentially far more critical, is the possible reaction of the minibus-taxi industry. This informal sector para-transit business operates mainly line-haul services on an unscheduled, cash-only basis, using 15-passenger vans which now carry 65% of South African daily commuters. The new BRT network will have a major impact on the industry's income. This problem is compounded by the fact that the minibus-taxi industry has been infiltrated by gangsters, warlords, and plain vested interests, who make money by extracting what can only be described as protection fees.

To address this issue, BRT promoters hope to implement a Bogotá-style business model. In essence, the minibus-taxi operators will be encouraged to swap their small vehicles for the large BRT buses. They will then be contracted to provide a given number of bus-kilometres of service, and paid accordingly.

The initial response of the taxi leadership has been cautious. Moosajee and her team have given them until September 2007 to decide whether they want to participate. The deadline is presumably linked to the need to order new vehicles so that they can be delivered in time for the planned start date of April 2009.

Some believe that the best outcome would be for the minibus-taxi operators to stay out of at least the first phase, and for the city to take account of the impact of BRT on minibus-taxi income. This would provide more time for the city to focus on transformation of minibus-taxi operations.

If the minibus-taxi operators do agree to participate, a number of problems could arise. For example, implementation could be held up over disagreements about details. Perhaps worse, the operators' informal sector background could make it difficult for them to provide high-quality BRT services.

The situation is fluid, and potentially volatile. Watch this space!

*Paul Browning is an independent transport analyst based in Pretoria. You can read more of his views on the South African transport scene on [www.paulbrowning.co.za](http://www.paulbrowning.co.za).*

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*Transport Innovator* welcomes guest columns on any topic related to sustainable transportation. Submissions should be no more than 1-2 pages in length and may include graphic materials. Although we may edit for length and style, we will obtain the author's permission to publish edited columns. Please send all guest columns to [info@gobrt.org](mailto:info@gobrt.org).

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### ***In the Spotlight: US Transportation Funding Update***

The Bush Administration sent its fiscal year 2008 budget request to Congress in early February. The proposed transportation budget includes \$100 million for Small Starts projects, the new category for small fixed guideway or dedicated right-of-way projects such as BRT, rapid bus and streetcar service. The budget sets aside \$52 million for four eligible BRT or rapid bus projects, with the remaining \$48 million available for new proposals. The four projects, which will now enter into project development, are the Kansas City Troost Corridor BRT; the Los Angeles Metro Rapid Bus System Gap Closure; Lane Transit District's Pioneer Parkway EmX BRT in Springfield, Oregon; and King County Metro's Pacific Highway South BRT.

The New Starts budget, which funds larger fixed guideway projects, requests that \$72 million be made available for six projects which may become eligible for funding in fiscal year 2008. This list includes three BRT lines: the Hartford-New Britain Busway in Connecticut and the North Corridor and Southeast Corridor BRT lines in Houston, Texas.

Finally, there are three BRT or busway projects “in the pipeline” for FTA funding, but not yet advanced enough to be considered for funding: the Boston Silver Line Phase III; the Urban Transitway Phase II in Stamford, Connecticut; and the Downtown Transit Service Enhancement Project in Jacksonville, Florida.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will monitor all eligible projects, which must continue to meet FTA evaluation criteria to successfully secure funding.

The Administration’s funding requests are subject to the appropriations process in Congress, which may enact different transportation funding levels and priorities.

<http://www.dot.gov/bib2008/bibpart08fta.htm>  
[http://www.fta.dot.gov/news/news\\_events\\_6402.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/news/news_events_6402.html)  
APTA Passenger Transport, Feb. 12, 2007

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## *BRT and Innovative Bus Service*

### **Guatemala City’s TransMetro BRT launched**

The first phase of Guatemala City’s new TransMetro BRT system opened in February 2007. Sixty-five articulated, low-emission Volvo buses travel in segregated median busway lanes from downtown to southern portions of the city. The service also features electronic fare collection and level boarding from new stations and transfer terminals. The service is expected to save riders an hour of travel time.

Officials plan to develop 10 TransMetro trunk lines spanning the northeastern, western, southern and central portions of the city. When fully implemented, the new BRT/feeder bus routing system will reduce total bus kilometers traveled by nearly a third. These changes are also expected to reduce the noise and air pollution from buses, and lower overall transit fuel consumption. Guatemala City has an estimated population of more than 2.5 million.

For more information visit the TransMetro website:  
<http://transmetro.muniguate.com>



TransMetro bus in station  
Source: TransMetro

### **Pune, India BRTS has trouble-filled start**

Pune, India’s Bus Rapid Transit Service (BRTS), launched in December 2006, has had a troubled start. Only half of the first line’s 13-km dedicated bus lane was completed in time for the opening, causing traffic jams and delays where the buses were forced to operate in mixed traffic. More seriously, there have been several injuries and deaths, primarily due to pedestrians and vehicles entering the busway illegally. After the first incident, Pune Municipal

Transport (PMT) launched a public awareness campaign, and more traffic wardens were deployed to monitor the corridor, but there have continued to be problems with pedestrians.

Local news reports and commentary have blamed poor planning and premature implementation of the system. In the January issue of *India Together*, the U.S. Federal Transit Administration's Venkat Pindiprolu criticized the project, noting that planning is essential to anchor such a system and that Pune's pilot project does not merit being called a rapid transit system. He recommended that the project be expanded to "high-end BRT on multiple dedicated lanes to facilitate express and local service, with supporting systems..."

In spite of these problems, the government is moving ahead with plans to expand the rapid bus network, adding five more routes for a total of 26 planned routes.

<http://cities.expressindia.com/fullstory.php?newsid=219267>

<http://cities.expressindia.com/fullstory.php?newsid=219564>

<http://cities.expressindia.com/fullstory.php?newsid=222123>

## Los Angeles approves Wilshire Rapid Express bus service

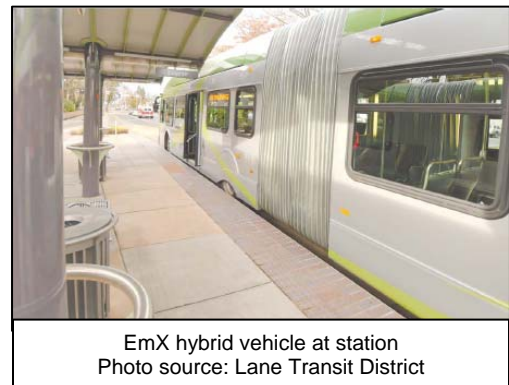


Los Angeles Metro has approved a new limited stop rapid bus service for Wilshire Boulevard, the agency's busiest corridor. Wilshire Boulevard, which runs between downtown Los Angeles and Santa Monica, is already served by Metro Rapid, the rapid bus service that uses signal priority and fewer stops to speed journeys. To further reduce travel times, the new Wilshire Rapid Express will make only seven stops during peak travel hours, instead of the 21 stops served by the Metro Rapid Wilshire-Whittier bus line. Metro projects that the Wilshire Rapid Express, which may open as early as June, will be 12 minutes faster than the Metro Rapid service.

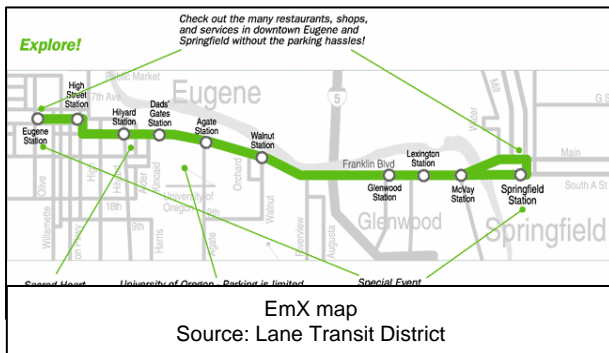
<http://abclocal.go.com/kabc/story?section=local&id=4833190>

## Eugene/Springfield EmX rapid bus service debuts

Oregon's new EmX *Green Line* rapid bus was launched in January 2007, providing service between Eugene and Springfield along Franklin Boulevard, the area's highest ridership corridor. The four-mile route features exclusive single and dual bus lanes along 60% of the route; signal priority and queue jump lanes in mixed traffic; eight median and curbside stations with enhanced amenities; and ten-minute headways on weekdays. Green Line buses are 60-ft hybrids with boarding on both sides. They were purchased by EmX operator Lane Transit District (LTD) in partnership with the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, which is currently constructing its own BRT line. Final EmX Green Line construction cost, including vehicles, was \$23.5 million.



LTD projects that corridor ridership will increase 50%, from 2,800 boardings per day to 4,200. Early results indicate that this goal is being met. The agency's goal was also to deliver 16-minute travel time between Springfield and Eugene, 25% faster than existing bus service. Trial runs ranged from 13 and 21 minutes, reportedly due to drivers slowing down along the curved bus lanes and glitches with the signal priority.



The Green Line is the first five proposed EmX corridors. Planning for the second EmX line, the 6-mile "Pioneer Parkway" line, is underway, with service expected to begin in 2010. Until Pioneer Parkway corridor opens, Franklin EmX service will be free.

For more information on EmX visit LTD's website: <http://www.ltd.org>

### Bangkok BRT plan is approved



Thailand's Cabinet has approved a Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) plan to construct the first phase of the city's BRT, a 16.5 km (26.4 mi) dedicated route between Chong Nonsi and Bangkok Bridge. The project is estimated to cost Bt600 million (US\$17.9 million) and will carry about 40,000 passengers per day. If successful, additional lines will be added. The entire BRT network could be completed within three to five years.

Bangkok's governor stated that the first phase of the BRT service could be launched in a year, three times faster than the city's planned electric train service. The Governor had hoped the first BRT route would be operable by 2005, but the project was delayed in part by a lack of support from the national government.

[http://nationmultimedia.com/2007/01/07/headlines/headlines\\_30023470.php](http://nationmultimedia.com/2007/01/07/headlines/headlines_30023470.php)  
[http://www.bangkokpost.com/breaking\\_news/breakingnews.php?id=116098](http://www.bangkokpost.com/breaking_news/breakingnews.php?id=116098)  
[http://nationmultimedia.com/2007/01/04/national/national\\_30023231.php](http://nationmultimedia.com/2007/01/04/national/national_30023231.php)

### Santiago, Chile: Transantiago has chaotic first week

Santiago, Chile (population 6.5 million) launched its Transantiago bus network in February 2007. Transantiago has two exclusive lanes, feeder buses, new stations, electronic fare payment, and high-capacity, low-emission diesel buses. The system was designed to replace many of the city's private micro buses and to improve air quality.

Unfortunately, Transantiago's launch has been plagued with problems. According to local media reports, electronic fare card readers failed on many buses, causing substantial delays.

The government claimed that Transantiago's private sector bus operators failed to deliver enough buses to meet peak hour demand. In some places, the wait time for buses was reported to be as long as three hours. Some stranded passengers attempted to commandeer passing buses and some were reportedly successful.

The government is reportedly seeking fines from at least five of the system's private operators. However, at least one expert indicated that there are many other problems that are unrelated to the number buses, including a failure to use a sufficient amount of exclusive busways, placing fare card readers on board buses instead of in stations, requiring passengers to enter buses through one door only so that they can pass the on-board fare card reader, and having multiple routes stop at stations without using designated stopping points, thus requiring passengers to run back and forth on the platform in search of their bus.

Currently, schools and many workers are on vacation in Santiago. Government officials are looking for ways to improve system performance before they return, including the possible addition of more buses to the fleet.

[http://www.tcgnews.com/santiagotimes/index.php?nav=story&story\\_id=13009&topic\\_id=21](http://www.tcgnews.com/santiagotimes/index.php?nav=story&story_id=13009&topic_id=21)  
[http://www.tcgnews.com/santiagotimes/index.php?nav=story&story\\_id=13046&topic\\_id=20](http://www.tcgnews.com/santiagotimes/index.php?nav=story&story_id=13046&topic_id=20)

### **Lagos, Nigeria's BRT system to debut in April 2007**

The Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (LAMATA) has announced that the first phase of the city's BRT, the Ikorodu Road/Western Avenue network, will debut in April 2007. The system will be a "scaled down" version of BRT that will employ segregated bus lanes, high-capacity, multi-door buses, covered bus shelters and GPS vehicle tracking.

The new BRT is being managed by a public-private partnership organization, Lagbus Asset Management Limited, which is sponsored by Lagos State Government and the African Export-Import Bank (AFREXIM). The BRT system will be implemented in phases, replacing the city's "Molue" buses that are currently the primary form of public transport in Lagos. The Lagbus goal is to create a modern, sustainable, integrated transport system that will improve travel time, passenger comfort, safety and air quality.



Lagos concept BRT drawing  
Courtesy of LAMATA

For more information see the LAMATA web site: [www.lamata-ng.com/brt.htm](http://www.lamata-ng.com/brt.htm).

<http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200701220050.html>

## UK's Fastrack BRT exceeds ridership goals

The UK's first non-guided BRT system, Kent Thameside's Fastrack, is carrying 35,500 passengers per week and has exceeded initial ridership expectations by more than 50%. Launched in March 2006, Fastrack has already impacted travel behavior, with more than a quarter of passengers surveyed saying they had chosen to travel on Fastrack despite having a car available, and nearly a fifth saying they would previously have used a car for the same journey. Ninety-five percent of passengers rate Fastrack service as "excellent" or "good".

Fastrack is at the heart of a planned 40-km network connecting developments across Kent Thameside. Three additional sections of busway and priority lanes are already under construction, including a completely private sector-funded route. For further information on Fastrack visit <http://www.go-fastrack.co.uk/default.asp>.



Fastrack bus at station  
Photo source: Fastrack

[http://www.go-fastrack.co.uk/dl/Fastrack\\_release\\_22.11.06.pdf](http://www.go-fastrack.co.uk/dl/Fastrack_release_22.11.06.pdf)  
<http://www.transportbriefing.co.uk/story.php?id=3611> [subscriber only]

## Los Angeles Orange Line updates

In December, Los Angeles Metro opened a new station along the Orange Line, the city's 14-mile dedicated BRT corridor. The Canoga Station is the 14<sup>th</sup> along the busway and will serve as the starting point for a planned six-mile extension north to the Chatsworth Metrolink station. The station has a park and ride facility, increasing the number of free parking spaces on the Orange Line to more than 3,800. The 6.5 acre station and parking facilities cost \$26 million to build.



Orange Line articulated bus  
Photo source: Metro

Also in December, Metro began re-paving portions of the busway where the pavement has been crumbling even though it was expected to last for 20 years. According to Metro, the asphalt did not meet specifications. The contractor denies the allegation. The cost of the repairs is estimated at \$1.5 million. Metro has withheld \$5.8 million of the \$15 million contract while issue is being resolved.

Additionally, Metro has received a special permit for a 65-ft. bus trial along the Orange Line beginning in summer 2007.

The trial vehicle is five feet longer than current Orange Line buses and can accommodate 14 additional passengers. If successful, a fleet of these buses could eventually be used to help meet high passenger demand, but new legislation would be required as California law presently restricts bus length to 60 feet. Metro is also considering the use of 80-ft. buses along the Orange Line.

[http://www.metro.net/news\\_info/press/metro\\_225v.htm](http://www.metro.net/news_info/press/metro_225v.htm)  
<http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/california/la-me-orangeline22dec22.1,2287215.story?coll=la-headlines-pe-california>  
[http://www.dailynews.com/search/ci\\_5152554](http://www.dailynews.com/search/ci_5152554)

## Alternative Fuels

### **Governments pledge commitment to hydrogen public transport**

Governments from Europe, Canada and Australia have formed a consortium committed to hydrogen-powered public transportation. Consortium members will make their procurement plans public in an effort to demonstrate the potential global market for hydrogen fleet vehicles and speed introduction of commercial products. The consortium will also allow members to learn from each others' procurement experience. Founding members are Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Hamburg, London, British Columbia, and Western Australia. Membership will be open to other interested parties.

<http://www.fuelcellsworks.com/Supppage6765.html>

### **Hybrid buses perform well in recent evaluations**

A 12-month evaluation of hybrid buses in Seattle found that, on average, the hybrids' fuel economy was 27% higher than comparable diesel buses. The Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) evaluated ten hybrid and ten diesel buses run by King County Metro in similar service. The evaluation vehicles were all 2004 New Flyer 60-ft buses with diesel particulate filters. The hybrids ran on a GM-Allison hybrid drive instead of a diesel engine and cost about \$200,000 more.

The hybrids' fueling costs were 22% lower than the diesels' costs, while overall maintenance costs were similar. As a result, the hybrids' total operating cost per mile was 15% less than the diesel buses. The short evaluation period did not allow for a life-cycle cost analysis.

King County Metro has operated a fleet of 235 hybrid buses since 2004. They recently issued an RFP for 20 hybrids with an option for up to 340 more.



King County Metro 60-ft hybrid bus  
Source: King County Metro

Translink, the transit agency for the greater Vancouver area of British Columbia, is running a demonstration and comparison of hybrid, natural gas, clean diesel, biodiesel and conventional diesel buses in regular revenue service. In preliminary results, the hybrids had the best fuel efficiency, lowest fuel costs and lowest emissions. A second test phase with a different test procedure will be conducted to confirm the results, which will be used to determine future bus purchases.

[http://www.nrel.gov/vehiclesandfuels/fleetest/avta\\_king.html](http://www.nrel.gov/vehiclesandfuels/fleetest/avta_king.html)

<http://www.canada.com/vancouver/news/story.html?id=afab4729-24d2-4f55-8afe-a840c1edbfbc&k=99531>

[http://www.translink.bc.ca/About\\_TransLink/News\\_Releases/news09080501.asp](http://www.translink.bc.ca/About_TransLink/News_Releases/news09080501.asp)

## Washington Metro awarded clean energy bonds

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) will use \$14.67 million in U.S. Clean Renewable Energy Bonds (CREBs) to install solar energy equipment on its facilities. CREBs are interest-free bonds which can be issued by state and local government entities to finance renewable energy projects. Qualified projects include solar and wind, biomass, and geothermal facilities. WMATA will install the solar equipment on six buildings including three rail yards. WMATA anticipates it will save \$75,000/year in energy costs.

[http://www.wmata.com/about/MET\\_NEWS/PressReleaseDetail.cfm?ReleaseID=1471](http://www.wmata.com/about/MET_NEWS/PressReleaseDetail.cfm?ReleaseID=1471)

## My Pod: Driverless bus model unveiled in London

A U.K. design team recently unveiled the model for a driverless bus or "pod" that travels by tracking magnets embedded in the street. The vehicle can carry between 12 and 24 passengers, who would hail the pods using their cell phones. The pods could also link up to form a "train" and then split up to deposit passengers in residential areas. The vehicle is an electric/biofuel hybrid equipped with satellite navigation, intelligent cruise control and onboard speed and directional control systems. A prototype is expected to be ready for testing next year.



Driverless bus concept  
Photo source: Science Museum

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article572550.ece>  
<http://www.mobilemag.com/content/100/354/C11500/>

## Czech venture to develop hybrid fuel cell trolley bus

A hybrid fuel cell trolley bus is being developed through a new project in the Czech Republic. German fuel cell company Proton Motor Fuel Cell GmbH will work with Czech trolley bus manufacturer Skoda to develop the new bus, which is expected to start service in Prague by 2009. The project is supported by the European Commission.

<http://www.iii.co.uk/news/?type=afxnews&articleid=5962115&action=article>

## Transportation Policy

### Jakarta proposes measures to reduce congestion, encourage transit

Jakarta's city administration plans to discourage the use of private vehicles by improving TransJakarta busway services, implementing electronic road pricing and increasing parking fees. The measures are intended to reduce the city's heavy traffic congestion and improve air quality. Jakarta currently imposes a "three-in-one" system - three people in one car - along main streets to reduce traffic volume entering the city. The city is also considering a ban on motorcyclists on main roadways during peak travel hours.



Blok M-Kota busway (Corridor 1)  
Photo source: TransJakarta

Jakarta's streets are used by at least 2.5 million cars, 3.8 million motorcycles and 255,000 public transit vehicles. The resulting congestion has decreased travel speed, which rarely exceeds 34.5 km/h (21.6 mph). Motor vehicles are also one of the city's chief sources of air pollution and, despite a phase-out of leaded gasoline Jakarta's air is among the world's dirtiest.

City officials anticipate that TransJakarta busway corridors 4 through 7, which debuted in January 2007, will attract 20% of their passengers from private cars. However, the new corridors are presently operating at low capacity

because only 40 of 216 buses ordered have been delivered. Officials anticipate that the remaining buses will be received by April 2006. In the meantime, 22 buses have been borrowed from corridors 1, 2 and 3, for a total of just 62 buses spread among the four new corridors.

<http://www.thejakartapost.com>

## Beijing's bus fares subsidized to encourage transit ridership

The Beijing government is providing 1.3 billion yuan (US \$155 million) to subsidize bus fares for the city's nine million commuters. Fares have been discounted by as much as 80%, with ticket prices typically ranging from 20-60 cents (US). City officials are hoping to boost public transit ridership and ease the city's traffic congestion before the 2008 Olympics. Early reports from bus companies indicate that ridership has not increased significantly in response to reduced prices.

Car ownership in Beijing currently stands at 2.87 million motor vehicles, and is expected to grow to 3.8 million vehicles in 2010.



DaimlerChrysler fuel cell-powered bus in Beijing  
Photo source: DaimlerChrysler China

[http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/2008/2007-01/11/content\\_781286.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/2008/2007-01/11/content_781286.htm)

## Odd But True

### The buzz on Bulgarian bus stops

A news rumor recently surfaced claiming that the Bulgarian capital, Sofia, is entertaining waiting bus passengers by displaying soft core pornography on a giant plasma screen in the city's Central Bus Station. The story claims that the "entertainment" is being shown late at night to take passengers' minds off of the cold weather. The chief coordinator of the city's public transport company states the rumors are "ridiculous" and that he has received no complaints from passengers. However, the transport company plans to launch an investigation.

[http://international.ibox.bg/news/id\\_1395623771](http://international.ibox.bg/news/id_1395623771)

[http://www.novininite.com/view\\_news.php?id=76382](http://www.novininite.com/view_news.php?id=76382)