Now that I’ve gotten your attention… I’ll bet a great number of our 3,600 King County Transit members thought, “Wait a minute… did I miss something?” The answer is no, you didn’t, and I’ll explain.

In addition to our largest represented group, Metro/King County, most of you may know we have five other labor contracts representing members at Seattle Personal Transit (SPT), Jefferson Transit (Port Townsend and Forks), Clallam Transit (Port Angeles and Forks), and Paratransit Services (Port Angeles and Forks), and Paratransit Services (Port Angeles and Forks).

**MV Negotiations**

On Friday, May 21st, Local 587 members from MV Transportation attended a contract proposal meeting and voted to ratify a new 3-year agreement. Access service providers, transporting handicapped, elderly, and those with special needs, are notoriously underpaid. This new labor agreement provides our members at MV significant wage increases over the next three years as well as other gains and improvements in contract language. Contract negotiations spanned four months with twelve negotiating sessions.

I extend my sincere gratitude to my Negotiating team: Shop Stewards Dobbie Boyington, Mel Greidig and member Dave Wick, Executive Board Officer Ninus Hopkins and Recording Secretary Jennie Gil. These dedicated people were an invaluable help to me. I also extend, on behalf of our team, a Thank You to the management contract negotiators from MV: Vice President of Human Resources Dave Smith, VP Wayne Fritz, and General Manager MV South Park Scott Schell. As in all labor contract negotiations there are moments of significant stress, tension, and anxiety on both sides and at times it is difficult to keep the emotions in check. They maintained professional behavior even in the most difficult of discussions.

The MV contract is our third ratified labor agreement in the past six months. New three year agreements were negotiated and became effective on January 1st with Clallam Transit and Paratransit Services. My deepest appreciation to Executive Board Officer Joe Mangiameli, who expertly handled those negotiations on the peninsula, along with his negotiating teams: Jay Winters, and Jerry Morris at Clallam Transit, and Linda Stern and Ed Starnard at Paratransit Services.

Jefferson Transit is ramping up their negotiations process and expect to begin soon, as their contract expires December 31st of this year.

**Metro Negotiations**

All Metro 587 contract classification committees are up and running. Our committees will be meeting with their respective...
IN LOVING MEMORY...

Be open to your dreams, people. Embrace that distant shore. Because our mortal journey is over all too soon.

— David Assai

Ronald Dean Weyrick, passed away May 7th, 2004, after a long and strenuous battle with cancer. Brother Weyrick was a long time Part-time Transit Operator, having joined Local 587 in 1982.

He was an active member, last working out of East Base. Ron was an actor when he was not driving a bus, having appeared in several movies including Harry and the Hendersons, theatre productions and television commercials. Ron frequently played the harmonica for his bus riders and fellow coworkers, and loved to make people smile. His strength, courage, and most especially perseverance during his long, arduous battle with cancer will leave a lasting impression for many, including those managers I worked opposite of while helping him make his way through this difficult time. He will be greatly missed.
**GHC Progressive Consumer Caucus**

By Karen Zytniak, SEIU Local 1199

This year union members across the state are helping to set a progressive agenda at Group Health by becoming a voting member of GHC and by joining forces with the Progressive Caucus. ATU 587 has joined forces with the GHC Progressive Consumer Caucus, an independent organization of Group Health Cooperative that works to safeguard cooperative principles, protect member rights, and advocate for health care for all through the election of progressives to the GHC Board of Trustees and through resolutions at GHC’s annual meeting.

With progressive leadership on the board, Group Health can stand on our side in the struggle for universal coverage for all Americans. No other health care provider is governed by consumers. Every adult consumer covered by Group Health is a consumer with the power to vote. As a voting consumer member of Group Health Cooperative, consumers can elect the board which sets policy and direction for the Co-Op. We need to support candidates who will fight to return Group Health to its democratic, pro-labor, pro-working people roots. The cost of health care coverage and the maintenance of benefits is an issue for everyone – especially working people and retirees. The time to act is short. The deadline to register for this year’s election is June 25th. If you have not already signed up with the GHC Progressive Consumer Caucus and registered to become a voting member of Group Health, do it today.

Contact:

GHC Progressive Consumer Caucus
747 21st Avenue East, Seattle, WA 98112
call 206-324-9258 or email GHCProgress@earthlink.net.

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**Retiree Picnic**

June 10th, 2004

11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Lower Woodland, Stove 6

Hot dogs, drinks and condiments will be provided. Please bring a side dish if you are able.

At present we have two north end Retiree Chapter meetings. The first Saturday of each month we meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Colonial Pantry in Firdale Village in Edmonds. Every Tuesday at 7:00 a.m. we meet at Mr. Bills at 130th and Aurora.

We have a south end meeting at the Burien Denny’s at 148th and 1st Avenue South. That meeting takes place the third Saturday of each month, at 8:00 a.m.

The picnic and meetings are a chance to meet with old friends. Mark your calendars and come join us.

Dave Carter
Secretary/Treasurer, ATU 587 Retiree Chapter

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**UPCOMING AT LOCAL 587**

**JUNE 5** — Summer shakeup begins for Transit Operators and Vehicle Maintenance.

**JUNE 7** — Jefferson Transit Shop Steward elections, to be held at the JTA membership meeting as per bylaws.

**JUNE 8** — Nominations close for shop steward for Metro/King County Transit Operators and Vehicle Maintenance.

**JUNE 10** — ATU Local 587 Retiree Chapter picnic, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Woodland Park, Stove 6.

**JUNE 17** — 20 – Northwest Conference, Vancouver British Columbia.

**JUNE 17** — Shop Steward elections for Metro/King County Transit Operators and Vehicle Maintenance, as necessary.

**JUNE 22** — Executive Board meeting.

**JUNE 23** — Chief Shop Steward nominations close for Metro/King County Transit Operators and Vehicle Maintenance.

**JUNE 23** — Summer School for Union Women, Olympia, WA.

**JUNE 24** — 27 – ATU Women’s Caucus Conference, Portland OR.

**JULY 17** — SAVE THE DATE!! ATU Local 587 annual picnic, Lincoln Park, Shelter 5. 11:00 to 4:00 p.m. ALL MEMBERS WELCOME!!!
Local 1005 Donation

Dear Editor

Editor’s Note: At the March Executive Board meeting the Exec- utive Board voted to donate $1,600 to the ATU Local 1005 Strike Fund, to assist our Brother- ers and Sisters in Minneapolis while they fought for a decent con- tract. The motion was subse- quently approved by the member- ship at the April cycle of meetings. That strike ended recently, and the officers of Local 1005 sent the following letter.

To the Officers and members of Amalgamated Transit Union Lo- cal 587:

We would like to take this time to thank you for all the support during our recent strike. We were on strike for six weeks and two days. It was hard on our members but we were all comforted by the tremendous outpouring of sup- port we got from our fellow union brothers and sisters. Whether you contributed cash, food, or support on the picket lines we appreciate all you did!

Ronald L. Lloyd, President / BA
Michelle R. Sommers, Vice President
Jerry Eaward, Financial Secretary / Treasurer
Kellie Miller, Recording Secretary / Asst. BA

Brother Dray

Dear Mr. Griffin:

I wish to thank you for the...death benefit for Dean F. Dray.

Oct. 3, 2001. When asked about

ways said, “I loved every minute

his work as a bus driver, he al-

In Solidarity,

Taovi McMahon,

North Base

Four-way Flashers

Dear Brother Bill,

The four-way flasher contro- vernzy is fascinating, really. Al- though I, like you, would prefer whirled peas to proper use of the little lights, I must beg to differ with your interpretation of the tenth reason, found on page 568, verse 9, psalm 34 Great Book. Though it is clearly herezy to pro- pose that the book is wrong, I must point out that page 568 is in the “Emergencies and Incidents” section, which, in my humble opin- ion, implies that four-way use is somehow an emergency action. (Similar to the old theory that pregnancy is a sickness rather than a condition normal to hu- man life.) I am of the opinion that four-way use should be encour- aged anytime we pose even a re- mote and distant hazard to any- one or thing.

It appears, Brother Bill, that you may be a believer in the Taxi Driver school of thought, which is to communicate nothing to any- body ever. I must admit that we are all entitled to our interpreta- tions of the writings of Metro, however misguided they might be. In this case, it is my opinion that a proper interpretation of Metro doctrine is a liberal one. In other words, psalm 34 should be read as broadly as possible; which would mean that, when you might have even an inch of a bus in a roadway, bicycle path or bus lane, your flashers should be on. If in doubt, flash.

If we examine history, we will find that those individuals who have been truly successful are those who communicate well. Look at Reagan, the great com- municator. I believe we should do our part by communicating with the yahoos behind us as much as possible in as many ways as possible. Amen!

Ronald L. Lloyd, President / BA
Michelle R. Sommers, Vice President
Jerry Eaward, Financial Secretary / Treasurer
Kellie Miller, Recording Secretary / Asst. BA

Flat Fare Petition

Dear Union Brothers and Sisters:

I wanted to take a moment to thank each and every one of you who took the time to sign the flat fare petition. As of this writing there were over one hundred sig- natures at the three bases I was able to personally oversee; North, Atlantic/Central, and Ryerson. (Someone has removed the At- lantic/Central petition, but hope- fully, by the time you read this it will have been returned). As re- ported last month, these results will be forwarded by our Union to the heads of the local and regional transportation committees. With a little luck, our combined efforts will help to make our jobs a little easier.

In this same vein I would like to share a method to ask ques- tions and request changes, insti- tuted at North Base by our own retiring Base Supervisor, Harold Mann (Happy Retirement, Harold). Harold used to leave a large (over 2 feet) note pad stuck to the wall in the hallway with a pen attached. Operators could freely write questions regarding the base, service requests, park- ing, bus routes, you name it. Sometimes humorous notes would be left, sometimes serious. Harold would leave weekly responses to all the serious inquiries.

I think it would be a great idea for all the bases to have a similar system, with one addition. Why not allow operator petitions to Metro to be posted as well? I will be speaking to the Base Chiefs and new Base Supervisor at North regarding the feasibility/accept- ability of this idea. I realize that for routing and service requests we have established forms to use, but these forms reflect and report the individual operator suggestions for changes, and are time con- suming to complete. If a number of us signed a petition for a par- ticular change, however, it would be faster for those of us without the time or inclination to print our requests. It would also carry more weight, given the number of signers, just like our current peti- tion for a flat fare...

Sincerely,

Brother Dray

In Solidarity,

Andrew Jeromsky, 87807
North Operations
Letter to the Editor

Fair Fare System Someday

Dear Brother Jeromsky,

Thank you for your letter in the May News Review. It is an interesting idea, which I agree with in part. Simplifying our fare system and making it easy to use like a bus system could be a step in the right direction. However, I must point out that a flat fare system would only really benefit the wealthier riders and prejudice the less well off.

I believe that a sliding scale fare system is the only way to achieve true equity in our transit system. Currently a rider who commutes daily to their job pays $2.00 for a two-zone fare. That rider might make minimum wage ($15,600 a year) or $100,000 a year and our current fare system, as well as your proposed system, charges them the same amount of money. Riding the bus every workday of the year paying, $2.00 per ride, equals $520 per year. As a proportion of income, this results in the minimum wage earner paying approximately six times as much as the person making $100,000.

We are residents of a state with one of the most regressive tax systems in the nation. We lack an income tax, which would spread the tax burden more fairly than our current sales tax system, which, as a percentage of income, costs working class people much more than the wealth. We voted out the progressive car tab tax in favor of one that ultimately benefits those with very expensive cars, who can generally afford them.

As working people who pay taxes, it is in our own best interest to make sure that our tax system is fair. While we are worrying about a couple of quarters at the fare box, our tax system and those who benefit from it are robbing us (drivers and passengers) blind. Twenty years ago Corporate America paid 17% of the national tax burden. Today those companies pay 7% of the tax burden. Guess who picks up the tab?

My favorite non-payment experience involved a chronic inebriant who asked for a ride before entering the bus, he asked nicely and told me he was broke. I pointed out his good manners and he got on. Then he said something very profound. He said, “You know I drink a lot of booze and I smoke a lot of cigarettes! I pay a lot of taxes!” He was right. And even if you don’t drink and smoke a lot, you’re paying a disproportionate share of the tax burden.

Why should we encourage the continuation of an unfair fare system? I propose that our regional transit authorities institute a fare system that takes into account the financial means of the riders, and taxes appropriately.

In Solidarity,
Taavi McMahon,
North Base

Non-Payment of Fare

Rarely a week goes by in which I’m not discussing an incident of non-payment of fare. When a customer doesn’t pay the fare, the operator, and often the other passengers, are left feeling cheated. Non-payment, or our reaction to it, is a principle cause of both customer complaints and driver assaults. Many, if not most, of King County Metro Operators are of the opinion management should be doing more to enforce fares. This opinion is based on a belief that enforcing fares will lower assaults and improve working conditions.

Portland, Oregon, had a similar problem with fare collection. A few years back Portland management decided to hire fare enforcement officers to stop non-payment of fares. At the time Portland was collecting about 18% of operating revenue from the fare box (King County Metro collects about 25% of operating revenue from the fare box). Once the fare enforcement policy was in place, Portland found it was spending 10% of the 18% operating revenue it was collecting from the fare box on enforcement. Unfortunately Portland collected almost no additional revenue as a result of the enforcement and most important operator assaults didn’t decline. Portland operators report no improvement in working conditions.

The policy, ask once but only if you think it’s safe to do so, is disingenuous at best. Asking once can and does lead to assaults. Recently I spoke with an operator who was punched by a senior citizen for asking for an addition quarter during peak hour. The operator reported being surprised by how hard he was hit. Many of our passengers are homeless, hungry, and angry at the world. They have no fear of going to jail. Going to jail equates to three hot meals, a warm bed and medical/dental care. No amount of security short of an armored proof compartment can prevent assaults when asking a down-and-out-for-fare rider.

As a union officer I often hear from operators who were assaulted as a result of asking once for fare. The assaults are often not reported for fear of discipline after an operator defends him or herself. We’ve all heard the Metro Mantra, don’t get out of the seat, don’t talk more than once for fare, and don’t strike back unless repeatedly struck. The unwritten rule, if assaulted don’t report it, is the motivation for the Mantra. Metro knows full well that if operators are vigorously challenged following an assault it sends a clear message to both the assaulted operator and the rest of the work force, don’t report assaults.

I don’t ask once for fare, as I know it is not to safe to do so. The Book, on page 570, specifically states not to ask if the operator does not deem it safe. It is also repeated again on page 572, under Fare Disputes. I also don’t want to respond to the idiotic complaints from dead-beats in my base chief’s office, or go home angry after a passenger conflict. Nor do I want to be assaulted. If Metro management really wants to collect fare on my bus they are welcome to have fare enforcement officers or managers ride my bus and collect it themselves. I suggest Mary Peterson in her mole suit (Metro’s favorite furry) or Harold Taniguchi. My suggestion to my fellow operators is to not ask once for fare. It is not safe to ask once and you don’t need the consequences that come with asking once.

New operators should beware of the bullpen bull. It is just that, bull. Operators who sit around in the bullpen and profess that they refuse transportation or refuse to hand out transfers for less than full fare aren’t doing you a favor by suggesting you do the same. Regardless of your level of seniority Metro provides the only thing that can change your clientele is seniority. Better yet, learn to go with the flow and enjoy each day by avoiding passenger conflicts over fare and your clientele won’t bother you as much.

Not asking once doesn’t make fare evasion acceptable. The question for operators is not whether fare evasion is acceptable. The question is who should be responsible for fare enforcement. It shouldn’t be the operator.

Paul J. Bachtel, Executive Board Officer

The Power of One

What difference can one person make? Plenty, it’s never too early to volunteer for the political candidate of your choice to help ensure their election.

Stuffing envelopes, making yard signs, door belling, phone calling or answering. The list goes on and on.

We remember Florida and the difference “a few” made. We have only ourselves to blame if we are unhappy with our current state of affairs. Unless we did something...

What are you willing to do to make a positive change? All campaigns are trying to effect change. Are you going to exercise the power of one?

Dee Wabenight

Thanks from Local 1015

Dear Brother Norton [and members of Local 587]:

On behalf of the members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local #1015, I would like to thank you for your assistance to the Save Our Transit Campaign. Your support and contribution to the campaign helped give us a landslide victory of 68% - 31%. It is apparent that the community has sent a powerful message that they support our regional public transportation system.

Your assistance in this campaign shows that when labor stands and drives we can move mountains. Once again, thank you.

Dennis Antoneillis
President/Business Agent
ATU Local 1015
President's Report, continued from page 1

managers in the very near future. The core committee, consisting of your four top union officers and Metro’s negotiating team, will be meeting starting in July.

New Buses!

At Metro/King County we have a new bus joining our fleet. It is a 60-foot articulated Hybrid Diesel-Electric bus. These buses are made for Metro by New Flyer Industries with a hybrid electric drive supplied by Allison Transmission, a division of General Motors. OK, so what is a hybrid diesel-electric bus? This big bus works much like the small hybrid cars that Toyota and Honda are producing. In the bus, electricity is generated by a computer-managed diesel engine. That electricity is stored for future use and can deliver up to 60% greater fuel economy than conventional transit buses, and can reduce certain emissions up to 90%.

Between now and December we’ll be receiving a total of 235 of these new hybrids. 212 are for Metro and 23 for Sound Transit Service. These will bring our fleet up to 1032 buses for Metro and 86 Sound Transit coaches, for a total fleet of 1388 coaches. Distribution of the new hybrids will be as follows: South Base 75, East Base 71, North Base 48, Atlantic 52. In addition, Ryerson base will be receiving 30 new low floor diesel artic. Much of the funding for these new coaches is through the Federal Transportation Administration. Special thanks to our County Executive Ron Sims and State Senator Patty Murray for their help in securing that funding.

New, but not really...

A major project undertaken by our outstanding Vehicle Maintenance department will be converting 39 of our dual mode Breda buses to trolley buses. The conversions will be performed in the Component Supply Center body shop, with a conversion rate of one bus per week for about a year. Of the remaining 176 Bredas, 50 will be put into long-term storage and used as parts cadavers and organ donors. The remaining 126 will be sent to North Base, one at a time, to strip needed parts for inventory. The stripped down buses will then be junked. For the duration of this major conversion project VM will be hiring two additional mechanics, two upholsterers, one electronic technician, one painter, and four sheet metal workers. Regards to all...

Be Safe

LFN

Why wasn’t I told?

By Jennie Gill

Why its going up

Plain and simple, we are getting a lot out of use it. Insurance rates are based on experience rating, or rather, how much the insured group pays it. Standard Insurance reported that in the period from 6/1/2003 through 1/31/2004, they took in $268,677 in premiums, and paid out $231,721 in benefits. Factoring in their administration costs and premium taxes, the current premium of $12.24 per member does not cover the costs we are incurring. So as of 7/1/04, the short term disability premium will be $12.85 per Metro member. This premium is deducted out every pay period, so divided by half, the checks will show an increase of .30 or .31 cents per pay period.

Claims submitted have included all classifications, the pie chart breakdown for claims submitted by occupation roughly matches the classification breakdown percentage. The most commonly covered diagnosis is bone/joint/muscle injuries, with back conditions being second.

COPE COMMITTEE CANDIDATE ENDORSEMENTS

May 26, 2004

At the May 25 Executive Board meeting, the Executive Board passed a motion to accept the following COPE endorsements:

- No on I – 864
- Yes on I – 55
- Deborah Senn – Attorney General
- Brian Sonntag – Auditor
- Mike Murray – Treasurer
- Al O’Brien – Leg. Dist. 1, Pos#2
- Mark Miloscia – Leg. Dist. 30
- Frank Chopp – Leg. Dist. 43
- Frank Rockefeller – Leg. Dist. 23, Pos#1
- Dennis Flannigan – Leg. Dist. 29, Pos#2
- Steve Conway – Leg. Dist. 39, Pos#1
- Steve Kirby – Leg. Dist. 29, Pos#2
- Mark Miloscia – Leg. Dist. 30, Pos#1
- Shay Schual-Berke – Leg. Dist. 33, Pos#1
- Dave Upthegrove – Leg. Dist. 33, Pos#2
- Eileen Cady – Leg. Dist. 34, Pos#1
- Joe McDermott – Leg. Dist. 34, Pos#2
- Sharon Tomiko-Santos – Leg. Dist. 37, Pos#1
- Eric Pettigrew – Leg. Dist. 37, Pos#2
- John McCoy – Leg. Dist. 41, Pos#2
- Judy Clibborn – Leg. Dist. 41, Pos#2
- Frank Chopp – Leg. Dist. 43, Pos#1
- Ed Murray – Leg. Dist. 43, Pos#2
- Hans Dunshee – Leg. Dist. 44, Pos#2
- John Lovick – Leg. Dist. 44, Pos#2
- Larry Springer – Leg. Dist. 45, Pos#2
- Phyllis Springer – Leg. Dist. 46, Pos#2
- Geoff Simpson – Leg. Dist. 47, Pos#1
- Jim Moeller – Leg. Dist. 49, Pos#1
The table below summarizes the U.S. for the foreseeable future. Of BRT projects will be rare in the is still "just bus service." For these opportunities around the country that BRT strident rail advocates in commu-

What is BRT?

BRT is an increasingly common phrase among urban transporta-
tion planners and communities who want to reduce traffic and the flexibility of buses. Systems range from lower-cost conventional fixed-route bus services with exclusive branding, stops and frequency that emulate light rail and priority in mixed traffic to exclusive lanes and busways with technologically advan-
vanced, stylized vehicles.

BRT is arguably the fastest-growing new mode in the history of U.S. public transportation. The Senate Banking Committee iden-
tified 50 U.S. communities that are either giving serious consider-
ation to BRT or actually have BRT projects under development. This figure is up from the 19 that com-
mited to join then-FTA Adminis-
trator Gordon Linton's Bus Rapid Transit Consortium in late 1998. Several more have announced such intentions since the Senate Bank-
ing Committee's analysis was made public last summer.

However, while BRT's advan-
tages are many, they narrow when compared to recent improvements in light rail project delivery and continue to carry a bias among strident rail advocates in commu-
nities around the country that BRT is still "just bus service." For these reasons:

Several types of BRT projects will be rare in the U.S. for the foreseeable future. The table below summarizes the strengths, weaknesses and costs of the range of BRT approaches.

Indeed, because BRT has such a broad range of applications, it has created confusion among policy-makers and operators alike, especially with respect to how it should be treated in the FTA's Major Capital Investment Pro-
gram. To help address these is-

Evolving BRT needs!

Particularly as the more sophis-
ticated of the early BRT projects have progressed through the fed-
eral government's application pro-
cess for major capital investment assistance, the industry's think-

For example, under current law, new starts for bus facilities can be funded out of the Major Capital Investment Program only if there is an exclusive guideway for buses or other high-occupancy vehicles. However, in both the Bush Administration's reauthorization proposal and in the Senate bill passed this winter, this require-

Perhaps the area where the industry's consensus has under-
gone the greatest evolution of thinking has been regarding ve-

cle design. While it is clear that the industry has always felt that BRT vehicles should be "more than just a bus," it is equally clear that it has for the most part rejected the European designs that initially had so intrigued the transit of-

ficials. This is not surprising, since these vehicles typically do not achieve performance characteris-
tics necessary for North American public transportation operating conditions, such as capacity, free-
way speeds for express service or "dead-heading" back to mainte-
nance facilities, gradability and acceleration. (This is also true of many European light rail ve-

ci)

This is not to say that American cities will have to settle for less. On the contrary, whether officials want to offer higher-quality ser-

Promising results

Rex Gephart, director of the Metro Rapid program at Los An-

gles County's Metropolitan Transportation Authority, says that each new route introduced has consistently shown a 30% to

be more acute. According to FTA estimates, federal policymakers face a fund-
ing shortfall between the value of all projects in the FTA's "pipeline" of new starts (including projects that are in various planning stages required by federal law) and rea-

sonably available sources of rev-

venue of more than $16 billion. Moreover, this does not include many of the BRT projects contemplated by the 50 cities previously cited. This is because many of them likely will not ask for Major Capi-
tal Investment Program money, relying instead on available state and local funds as well as federal formula grants.

Little wonder, then, that BRT solutions — particularly the lower-

cost ones — are becoming more attractive.

Moreover, when the projects are higher in cost and take longer to build, the advantages of BRT over light rail become narrower, and thus become more politically vul-
rerable to pro-rail factions.

Indeed, the Government Ac-
counting Office estimates that high-end BRT projects can aver-

age about $12 million per mile, compared with a recently opened light rail project in Portland, Ore., that is estimated to cost roughly $18 million per mile.

This is not to say that American cities will have to settle for less. On the contrary, whether officials want to offer higher-quality ser-
vices to choice riders, change the modal split and mitigate conges-
tion or stimulate economic develop-
ment, the forthcoming FTA guidance document will demon-
strate how a mix of the previously mentioned eight elements will achieve these rationales without spending the highest possible sums. We pay for these projects with our taxes. It would be crimini-

als as to why interest in BRT is so high now and will remain into the foreseeable future: money. Federal spending for the foreseeable future, competition for federal transit funding in the Major Capital In-

vestment Program has never

It would be criminal to just ignore these issues, not just as patrons, but as Transit Operators as well.

Will BRT interest wane?

There is very important ratio-

nale as to why interest in BRT is so high now and will remain into the foreseeable future: money. Federal spending for the foreseeable future, competition for federal transit funding during the past decade, and by all indications from Con-
gress for the foreseeable future, funding shortfall between the value of all projects in the FTA's "pipeline" of new starts (including projects that are in various planning stages required by federal law) and rea-

sonably available sources of rev-

Furthermore, BRT systems are now open in L.A., and 22 more are scheduled to be rolled out by 2008.
Remember the old 1400 series coaches? (No, you don’t have to answer that, I realize it might date you). Ever wonder where they went? A couple months back I received via fax an interesting article from the Chicago Sun-Times. It touted the proposed plan of action to phase out the non-air-conditioned, articulated buses the Chicago Transit Authority bought second hand from Seattle over three years ago. The plan, according to the CTA’s President, is to phase these dinosaurs out by the end of next summer.

CTA has purchased new, air-conditioned (they come that way?) articulated buses and they have been arriving in Chicago over the last year. They expect the entire order of 226 coaches to be delivered by the end of this year. They expect to retire our old coaches, 113 in all still on the street as of last November, by this summer.

The 1400 series buses, purchased as temporary replacements for the 33 artics that Chicago had on the road at the time, have been primarily used for lakefront routes, which carry a high passenger load. They were purchased from Metro/King County at a bargain basement rate, less than any of us would pay for a used car and expect it to still run the next morning. The part I found interesting, probably because whoever sent it to me had underlined and highlighted this particular paragraph, was that all but one of our 1400 series coaches were still in operation. Of the 33 buses that CTA had when they bought ours, only one is still working.

The new coaches purchased, which total around $98.7 million for the fleet of 226, are hitting the streets more slowly than they had anticipated, in part (get this) because of mechanical defects that needed to be fixed. Can you say retrofit? Gives me a shiver of déjà vu. The total cost, minus shipping and handling of course, of the 113 coaches that came from Seattle, came in right around $170,000. Sounds like they got pretty good bang for their buck.