

TRANSIT

A

Edmonton's Hanover 601 Streetcar returned to Germany

After more than a decade in Edmonton, "Hanover 601", the red and white streetcar that plied the rails atop the world's highest streetcar bridge, has been returned to its native Germany to celebrate the 125th anniversary of public transit in Hanover. It will become part of a museum collection in that city. The streetcar was sold for \$1.00 and departed Edmonton on September 16th.

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The six-axle high performance car dates from 1970 and was one of two, 600 built by Linke-Hoffman-Busch with Kiepe electrics, and 601 built by Düwag with Siemens equipment, as prototypes to replace the Hanover streetcar fleet. After testing, the operator ÜSTRA decided on eight-axle cars, and so the pair were returned to their respective builders. Boston and San Francisco wanted to bring 601 over as a prototype for a joint fleet renewal program, but this was nixed by Nixon who insisted on home grown vehicles, resulting in the disastrous SLRV design by Boeing Vertol with bodies from Japan. Düwag modified the 601 design to develop the U2 LRT car for Frankfurt, and it was subsequently modified for Edmonton, Calgary and San Diego.

R

When Edmonton's LRT line was being designed, ETS' Robert Clark, having established a connection with the Düwag management, suggested a tour of North American cities with 601, but Düwag's General Manager replied to the effect that Düwag built the best streetcars in the world and needed no such demonstration. About that time, Siemens decided to diversify its medical operation in Canada and brought along Düwag, going from a sub-contractor to prime, with the Edmonton order being key.

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The NDP government in British Columbia brought 601 over as part of their plan to revive the former interurban system, but they were defeated at the polls before the car arrived, and British Columbia was then sold on the "skytrain" concept by Ontario's Urban Transportation Development Corporation (UTDC).

601 was initially stored in the old Dominion Bridge Shop in Vancouver and later transferred to the Skytrain MSF in Burnaby with the idea of converting it to a works car, which never happened. In 1987, it was offered for sale, and the Edmonton Radial Railway Society bought it for \$1.00, much to the chagrin of the BC premier, who reportedly sent the RCMP after it, but by that time it had already crossed the Alberta border.

601 arrived in 1988 and ran briefly at Fort Edmonton Park in 1989. It was stored for years on LRT tracks after being repainted and overhauled electrically and mechanically, finally entering service on the historic High Level Bridge line in 2005. Its high capacity made it ideal for large events such as the Fringe Theatre Event. Photos on Page 2! [Sources: Global News, Sept. 13, 2016; R. R. Clark; www.edmonton-radial-railway.ab.ca]

Edmontonians can Track Buses in Real Time with New App

At an event celebrating live location technology on all 928 Edmonton buses in October, Edmonton Transit endorsed an app from the Montreal-based technology firm "Transit", saying the company's mobile app is Edmonton's favorite and should be a go-to resource for any rider. This makes a second app available to transit users in the Edmonton-area on which they can track the location of their bus in real time. (continued on Page 2)



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A Streetcar on the Move – Hanover 601

Photos courtesy of James Paull



601's last day of service in Edmonton, August 21, 2016



601 on a Farewell Charter August 28th, Left to Right: Chris Ashdown (President ERRS), Lincoln Ho, James Paull



601 prepares to depart Edmonton, September 13, 2016



World traveler 601 has arrived in Hanover, Germany, and sits among historic streetcars, completing the vehicle collection of one of each type of vehicle that served in Hanover.

Tracking Buses (con't)

"Transit" users can also open a map to see all routes in an area, have trip planning done on the fly and also find nearby fare media vendors.

Edmonton's \$200,000 home-grown app, ETS Live-to-Go, got poor reviews from transit riders and software developers. After surveying 8,000 riders and finding "Transit's" app was better, and ETS officials said that they will promote that app on their Web site.

Installing GPS and live location updates on all buses was done at a cost of \$18 million. The technology also lets buses make automated location and stop request announcements, and allows specific information to be displayed on an overhead screen. [Source: Edmonton Journal, Oct 26, 2016]

Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau signs Big Transit Deal for British Columbia

In June, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and BC Premier Christy Clark signed a transit funding agreement totaling over \$900 million, making British Columbia the first province in Canada to ratify a bilateral transit deal.

The prime minister said that, after a decade of lack of investment in infrastructure across the country, his government wants provinces and municipalities to make their own decisions about where the money is best spent. He said that investments in transit improve the quality of life of all Canadians, something he considers essential, and that his government had worked hard to bring together all the parties involved to ratify the earlier pledge.

Mayor Gregor Robertson of Vancouver praised the funding deal, saying that the past six years had seen Metro Vancouver's transit underfunded, and that the system had begun to decline. He said that \$57 million of the funding was earmarked for the planning and design of a Broadway subway and Surrey LRT, and that he was looking forward to seeing the projects fully funded and breaking ground in six months' time.

Trudeau said that \$370 million of the total is earmarked for infrastructure specific to Metro Vancouver. For the rest of the province, the agreement will mean investments in bus infrastructure upgrades, including more clean energy buses, a HandyDart service expansion, and the introduction of new technologies to make bus travel safer. [Source: CBC News, June 15, 2016]

Seattle's Waterfront Streetcars to serve in St. Louis

The famous George Benson Waterfront Streetcars will run again after more than a decade in storage -- but not in Seattle. The City of St. Louis, Missouri, has purchased three of the vintage cars for \$200,000 and will run them on a 2.2-mile route, mainly in an area known as "The Loop" along Delmar Boulevard. The Loop is named after the turnaround point for streetcars that stopped running there in 1966.

The tracks are already in place, and the Seattle trolleys will begin running in early 2017, according to the Seattle Times.

Getting streetcars along the Seattle waterfront was the signature accomplishment of the late Councilmember George Benson. He traveled to Melbourne, Australia, and secured five streetcars that dated from the 1920s. Seattle's Waterfront Line stopped service in 2005, one year after Benson died. Two cars still remain in storage in Seattle.

Native St. Louisan Joe Edwards has driven the revitalization of "The Loop". He says it's been designated one of the 10 great streets by the American Planning Association. Edwards says, "People trust the fixed track. It's clean electric transit, the prototype of how to connect one neighborhood to another."

[Source: Seattle Times, October 25, 2016]

Seattle: A Model City for 21st Century Electric Transit

Amid a massive overhaul of Seattle's 23rd Ave corridor, another project on the street has quietly got underway: building the infrastructure to transition the 48 diesel bus route to electric trolleybuses.

Connecting the U-District to Mt. Baker through the Central District and Capitol Hill, the route 48 is the workhorse of 23rd Avenue, shuttling riders the entire length of the corridor. Much of 23rd Ave has overhead wires to accommodate the 4 and 43, but the 48 line currently runs with diesel buses due to gaps in the overhead wire. 1.7 miles of overhead needs to be added to electrify the 48.

The Seattle Department of Transportation estimates a cost \$14.6 – \$17.5 million to fill these gaps, with \$9.4 million already secured through federal grants. Construction will include installing trolley poles, overhead wires, and traction power substations. The second phase of the project is expected to get underway next year, setting up the 48 to go electric in 2018.

"The Electric trolley bus is tried and true transit in Seattle," said SDOT's Transit Deputy Director Bill Bryant at a city-county joint transportation meeting. "It is particularly well suited for our hilly environment and lots of starts and stops."

There are clear environmental benefits, too. Diesel buses on the route use roughly 185,000 gallons of fuel a year. Electric trolleybus technology was found to be \$3.7 million cheaper annually than even the cheapest diesel hybrid bus according to an SDOT study. Electric trolleys will also significantly reduce noise along the busy corridor.



Brand new, state-of-the-art trolleybuses line up in Seattle, as that city modernizes its transit fleet. [Photo: D. Lam]

Transit riders are increasingly using electric modes of transportation around Capitol Hill and the Central District. The First Hill Streetcar and Capitol Hill light rail station carry thousands of riders a day on zero-emission trains.

Metro is currently also making further investments in its electric trolley bus fleet with all new vehicles. Seattle operates the nation's second-largest trolley fleet, and last year it began rolling out its first new trolleybuses in three decades. The state-of-the-art electric trolleys, manufactured by New Flyer, are equipped with low floors for easy boarding and backup battery power for traveling off-wire. As of October 14, 152 of 174 new trolleys had been put into service. [Sources: Capitol Hill Seattle Blog via Jeff Marinoff, April 13, 2016; Seattle Times, October 16, 2016]

In Motion Charging (IMC): Vossloh Kiepe sets the Future Path of Battery Electric Bus Fleets

The overhead wire infrastructure for trolleybuses in Arnhem, Netherlands will soon become a charging infrastructure for e-buses and eventually the backbone of a smart grid. Arnhem's new trolleybuses will be able to be operated as battery buses in sections without overhead wires, with charging being carried out on wired sections while the bus is in motion using trolley poles connected to the overhead wires.

German manufacturer Vossloh Kiepe is leading this cross border project in which ten parties from Gelderland (NL) and North Rhine Westphalia (D) are involved. On June 30th Euregio Rhine-Waal committed to the project known as E-bus 2020 IMC. In the future, Arnhem intends to change a major part of its Greengas powered bus fleet into IMC buses.

(continued on Page 4)

In Motion Charging (continued)

For this project, two IMC-battery-buses for wireless line extensions are being developed. These articulated e-buses will be able to drive at least 10 km without overhead wires. This will enable suburban areas such as Renkum to be connected by clean zero-emission buses that can replace the current gas or diesel buses in use without additional wiring. For this specific application, the batteries need to be charged with high power due to the limited time under wire.

Dr. Besold, CEO of Vossloh Kiepe, said that IMC is a key point for the sustainable implementation of e-bus fleets. "Overhead wires are the most efficient and economic charging infrastructure that will allow the introduction of reliable zero emission public transportation in medium and big cities." [Source: Vossloh Kiepe Corporation: October 20, 2016]

Irvine Bell Passes

The Edmonton Trolley Coalition is saddened to announce the passing of our long-time supporter Irvine Bell in late August of this year. Irvine was a chartered British Mechanical Engineer with extensive background in the mechanics and operation of electric trolleybuses and diesel buses. His knowledge, advice and support were of great assistance to Edmontonians who supported the retention and upgrading of the large electric trolleybus system that Edmonton once had during the Council debates between 2003 and 2008. Irvine was known for his expertise and contributions on transit issues in various corners of the world and will be sadly missed.

[Edmonton Trolley Coalition]

24 Metre Trolleybuses on Test in Lyon, France

During May, a 24 metre Hess double articulated "Light Tram" trolleybus began trials on routes C2 and C3 in Lyon, France. The principal objective was to determine whether a 24 metre vehicle would be able to negotiate difficult sections of the routes, such as the turning circle at Saint Paul and the Montée des Soldats.

If the trials are successful, the Hess "Light Tram" will be one candidate for a new vehicle procurement. Other vehicles will also be tested for the renewal of the fleet of 55 articulated trolleybuses on routes C1/2/3.

The intention is to place the renewal order in the year 2020. [Source: City Transport Info, May 30, 2016]

Sweden Installs First Electric Highway to test Electric Trucks

Sweden is testing a technology that feeds electrical power into trucks as they drive along a highway. A two-kilometre test stretch of Highway E16 in Sandviken, about 160 kilometres north of Stockholm, has been equipped with overhead electrical wires that can be used to feed power into trucks that have a hybrid-electric motor, says Trafikverket, the Swedish Transport Administration.

The power is fed into the motor via a current conductor on the roof of the truck called a pantograph, similar to the ones that power Edmonton's LRT. It is designed to connect automatically while the truck travels at speeds of up to 90 kilometres per hour. Once the truck leaves the electrified part of the highway, it returns to diesel-electric mode.

"Electric roads will bring us one step closer to fossil fuel-free transport, and has the potential to achieve zero carbon dioxide emissions," said Lena Erixon, director general of Trafikverket. "This is one way of developing environmentally smart transport on the existing road network."

The trial was launched in late June and will continue until 2018. [Source: CBC News July 5, 2016]

Cheap Driverless Cabs could give Transit Swift Kick

Public transit, the lifeblood of cities worldwide, is under threat from the biggest innovation in automotive technology since the assembly line – the self-driving vehicle. Self-driving cars being pioneered by a number of companies are poised to lower dramatically the cost of taxis, potentially making them cheaper than buses or subways, according to a joint report by Bloomberg New Energy Finance and McKinsey and Company. According to Bloomberg, having no driver to pay could reduce taxi prices to 67 cents a mile by 2025, less than a quarter of current costs.

It is a change with the potential to reshape commuting patterns. As prices fall, the challenge for cities is that cabs may become too popular. Instead of complementing public transit, they may lure commuters away from buses and trains, inundating streets with drone cars. By 2025, according to Bloomberg, the annual cost of taking driverless cabs would be even less than owning and driving your own vehicle.

“If we don’t manage this properly, the most dense cities in the world will be pretty unpleasant places to live,” said Colin McKerracher, an analyst with Bloomberg New Energy Finance.

Automakers have significant hurdles to overcome before cars can effectively drive themselves; the technology now is more like an autopilot that must be constantly monitored. While driverless cars have already shown the ability to handle highways, companies are pushing to perfect them for city streets, using GPS to navigate and sophisticated sensors to detect other vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists and pets.

“It’s an astounding development in the transportation world,” said Lucius Riccio, a professor at Columbia University and former New York City transportation commissioner. “This is the first major change in 100 years.” Elon Musk has pledged to have a Tesla drive itself to New York City from Los Angeles next year. General Motors acquired Cruise Automation in March, a company that is testing self-driving vehicles in San Francisco. And by 2021, Ford Motor Company expects to offer a fully autonomous car -- devoid of steering wheels and brake pedals -- for ride-hailing services.

“Urban driving is the most difficult piece of driverless vehicles,” said Carol Reiley, president and co-founder of Drive.ai, a Mountain View, California, company that develops software for self-driving vehicles. “But that is where we are heading.”

The shift could dramatically recreate streetscapes. “At the same time, we need to remember that cities are for people,” said Seleta Reynolds, general manager of the Los Angeles Department of Transportation. “We can’t let the arrival of driverless cars change that.” [Source: Bloomberg Technology, October 24th and 25th, 2016.]

Hillsborough Transit eyes Driverless Transit Vehicles

The Florida Department of Transportation is making available \$1 million to the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART) to fund an Autonomous Vehicle Circulator Service in downtown Tampa. The service, expected to launch sometime in 2017, will run from the Marion Transit Center through downtown along the Marion Street Transitway. That road is closed to driver traffic and offers only low-speed transit and emergency vehicle access.

The autonomous vehicle project is a continuation of HART’s ongoing efforts to increase its use of innovative technologies to enhance public transportation. “Our mission is to help solve the transportation needs of our area utilizing all transportation modes, while maximizing the use of the funding sources available,” FDOT District Seven Secretary Paul Steinman said in a release. HART describes the project as “one of the first of its kind in the U.S.”

The vehicle type has not been determined because the project is still in its early stages, however passengers will ride in something smaller than a bus but larger than a car, HART said. The service will provide an additional transit option for downtown commuters. [Source: Tampa Bay Business Journal, October 24, 2016]

Battery Bus News

Battery Buses for Capetown, South Africa

Chinese battery bus manufacturer BYD has won a bid to supply a fleet of 11 battery buses to the city of Cape Town, South Africa.

The City of Cape Town aims to become the first city on the African continent to use battery buses for public transport. The city's transport administration will initially use the easy access 12-metre-long buses as an express service on a 35 to 40-kilometer route between Khayelitsha and Mitchell's Plain, the city's central business district and the Metro Southeast region. The administration plans subsequently to reassign the buses to Cape Town's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system following completion of supporting infrastructure.

"Battery buses generate less noise than those with traditional diesel engines and provide a smoother ride for passengers and bus drivers." said Mr. Huang of BYD's Middle East and Africa Sales Division. "These clean-running buses will help provide Cape Town's residents with a more sustainable public transport system while assisting the country in achieving its environmental ideals." Cape Town aims to reduce carbon emissions through a range of policies that affect households, businesses, the city's transport system and electricity generation. Its "Energy 2040 Strategy" outlines a plan to increase transport efficiency so that carbon emissions targets are reduced by 3.2 percent by 2020. Transport accounts for 34 percent of carbon output in this city of 3.8 million people.

"BYD could potentially supply five more single deck battery buses and five additional double decker battery buses, depending on the city government's approval," Huang said. [Source: BYD Press Release, October 24, 2016]

Los Angeles Valley BRT to get Articulated Battery Buses

In its ongoing commitment to deploy clean, energy-efficient transit in Los Angeles County, LA Metro will purchase five new 60-foot battery buses and eight new charging stations for the San Fernando Valley's Metro Orange Line BRT thanks to a \$4.3 million grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation. Combined with Metro's \$5.8 million match utilizing Measure R sales tax funds approved by voters in 2008, \$10.1 million will be invested to jumpstart the Orange Line's planned transition from compressed natural gas to battery buses. New Flyer Xcelsior XE40 battery-electrics will begin operation by the end of next year.

The announcement represents the first deployment of 60-foot articulated electric buses for transit use in the United States. The Orange Line will be the highest ridership transit service ever tested for battery bus operation. The project is expected to demonstrate the durability and reliability of lithium ion battery technology for high ridership transit lines. Averaging 27,000 boardings per day, the Orange Line travels 18 miles between North Hollywood and Chatsworth. It is one of the nation's most successful BRT systems, accommodating 74 million boardings in its first decade of service. [LACMTA, Nov. 2, 2016]

Philly's SEPTA shows off Battery Bus

While it was busy getting the crowds to and from the Democratic National Convention, Philadelphia's SEPTA took time out on July 28th to show locals its latest in electric powered transit--a Proterra Catalyst battery-powered bus.

SEPTA ordered 25 of these buses in late April after winning a Low or No Emission Vehicle Deployment Grant from the Federal Transit Administration. SEPTA used the grant, which totals \$2,585,075, to cover the difference in cost between the more expensive battery-electric Proterra and the diesel-electric hybrids it was considering. The purchase price includes the charging stations needed to recharge the batteries both at the ends of the lines and at the bus depot.

The buses SEPTA is buying are models designed to charge quickly for use in round-the-clock service. Proterra says these buses can travel 50 miles in light traffic, or 30 miles in city conditions, before requiring a recharge. The batteries are charged via contact between an overhead supply cable and a metal contact box mounted on the roof of the bus. In regular service, the batteries can be fully recharged in five minutes.

Ironically, SEPTA plans to deploy the buses on two South Philadelphia crosstown bus routes, Route 29 on Tasker and Morris streets and Route 79 on Snyder Avenue, routes that were once fully wired for electric trolleys. Battery electrics are not as energy efficient as electric trolleys and are more intended as a replacement for diesel buses, where they can provide tangible advantages in terms of emissions and noise. SEPTA has been criticized in recent years for its refusal to reinstate electric trolley service on these routes despite pressure from the communities. [Source: July 29, 2016, Philadelphia News and Opinion]

Streetcar and Light Rail News

Streetcars Debut in Cincinnati

Cincinnati's new \$148 million streetcar service made its official debut in September, starting with several days of free rides. The streetcar known as the "Cincinnati Bell Connector" began carrying passengers on Friday, September 9th, operating on a 3.6-mile loop through downtown connecting The Banks along the riverfront and the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood. Motorists are allowed to drive in the streetcar lane in most areas along the route, but there are streetcar-only stretches.

Streetcar boosters, who had been patiently awaiting the resurrection of a system that was mothballed in 1951, are justifiably delighted. Cincinnatians who pushed for a trolley redux had to overcome two ballot initiatives that tried to halt the project, in 2009 and 2011, plus fierce resistance from the state's governor, John Kasich, who withdrew \$52 million in promised federal funding in 2011. Then a decidedly anti-streetcar mayor, John Cranley, stormed City Hall in 2013. Only the fact that the new rails were already half-installed kept the decade-long project alive: The estimated costs of halting the streetcar exceeded what it would take to complete it.

Since its inception, the service has been met with much higher ridership than expected, and delays in service generated tension between the city and the transit authority less than a month after the streetcar's launch. Large scale events in the area resulted in over 100,000 rides within the first two weeks of service, and the authority has had trouble meeting its 12 (weekdays) and 15 (weekends) minute schedule. Transit officials said they were prepared for about 3,000 rides per day, on average.

[Sources: News 2, September 9, 2016; The Atlantic City Lab, September 28, 2016; WCPO Cincinnati, October 6, 2016; Photo: The Atlantic City Lab]



Electric Traction returns to Santa Monica after 60 years

The first run of the newest U.S. light rail line, the Expo Line extension from Culver City to Santa Monica, California took place on Friday, May 20th. Passengers can now travel by electric rail all the way to the beach, much as they did 60 years ago.

A train broke through a giant Metro banner on the morning of May 20th at the downtown Santa Monica station at 4th Street and Colorado Avenue. The new line opened to the public at noon with free rides through to the end of service the following day.

This \$1.5 billion extension of the Expo Line offers Westside residents and commuters an alternative to sitting in congested freeway traffic. The estimated travel time between downtown Los Angeles to the downtown Santa Monica station is between 47 and 48 minutes.

City leaders and hundreds of others gathered to celebrate the opening of the 6.6-mile extension. Officials believe as many as 45,000 riders will use the line every day. [Sources: LA Times, May 20, 2016; ABC Eyewitness News, May 20, 2016, via W. Young/J. Marinoff]

DC Streetcar Sunday Service Launched

It seemed like the D.C. Streetcar would never start running. But on September 10th, the streetcar celebrated six months of operation, and D.C. officials say it's now ready for Sunday service. "With six months of passenger service complete, the streetcar is ready for the next step forward, the launch of Sunday service," D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser said in an early September news release announcing the milestone. "We continue to be impressed by the ridership numbers and look forward to attracting even more people to the H Street/Benning Road corridor each and every day of the week."

Sunday service on the 2.4-mile line launched Sept. 18. Officials also announced that service frequency will increase from every 15 minutes to 12 minutes.

More than 8,100 people joined Bowser back on Feb. 27 when the red, gray and yellow cars made their debut. Officials said that the streetcars have carried more than 400,000 people. The line has eight stops between Union Station and Oklahoma Avenue at RFK Stadium's parking lot. [Source: Washington Post, September 9, 2016]

At Right: "You can now take light rail to the beach!" – A multi-car train on Santa Monica's new light rail extension bursts through a giant METRO banner on the morning of Opening Day, Friday, May 20th, 2016 at the Downtown Station. [Photo: ABC Eyewitness News, Santa Monica].



Electric Streetcar Sparks Effect: Kansas City Streetcars draw Ever More Patronage

A lovefest is raging in Kansas City, which unveiled its 2.2 mile streetcar line in May. The KC Streetcar claims an average daily ridership of 6,800, well above early projections, and is earning raves for its fare-free service and its well-designed route that connects the city's major downtown attractions,

It's hard not to succumb to the charms of the streetcar. Urbanists delight in their ability to promote and their commitment to permanency. Environmentalists dig their cleaner emissions and greater passenger capacity compared to diesel-spewing buses. Older folks appreciate their nostalgia factor and low-floor boarding, which makes them easier on wheelchair users and aging knees. The business community enjoys the developer-friendly subsidies and other sundry tax breaks that often accompany their construction. And just about everyone likes the whole Euro-classy vibe they evoke.

As Kansas City's downtown streetcar system approached its one millionth ride at the end of September, the cars are so crowded that the Streetcar Authority wants to buy two more vehicles and possibly expand the route north to Berkley Riverfront Park. "It's a good problem to have," Streetcar Authority member Russ Johnson said Thursday, noting that the downtown streetcar starter route, from the River Market to Union Station, had been expected to average about 2,700 rides per day. Instead, since it opened May 6, it has averaged about 6,600 rides per day -- with Saturday ridership often exceeding 10,000 rides. Kansas City has had some of the highest ridership per mile of any system in the country. "Route matters," Johnson said. "There is something special going on in Kansas City."

The authority has voted to develop a financing plan to add two more streetcars to the four-vehicle fleet. However, because each car is custom-made and the procurement process takes so long, they likely won't arrive until 2019. A feasibility study will be conducted of the proposed extension. [Sources: Kansas City Star, September 29, 2016 The Atlantic City Lab, September 28, 2016; WCPO Cincinnati, October 6, 2016]

Old San Diego U2 LRT Cars to serve as Training for Dog Teams

Two of the original DüWag U2 light rail vehicles that served the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System for decades were loaded onto flatbed trucks for their final journey to San Antonio, Texas at the beginning of October. The U2 LRT cars will be used for the Transportation Security Administration and Department of Homeland Security National Explosives Detection Canine Team Program (NEDCTP).

The vehicles, which weigh about 80,000 pounds each, were cut in half, hoisted by crane and strapped down to flatbed trucks for their 1,300-mile trip. That distance is small compared to the 2.5 million miles that the cars traveled over the 35 years they transported people in San Diego. It is estimated that each car carried 9 million passengers since beginning service in 1981. The cars were manufactured in Germany by Siemens, which now has a manufacturing plant in Sacramento, California and continues to supply MTS with new light rail vehicles. Similar cars are still in use in Edmonton and Calgary.

"These cars were the workhorses of our system since the inception of light rail," said Paul Jablonski, chief executive officer of MTS. "It is satisfying to see that their life has been extended and that they will play a role in keeping transit system patrons safe."

TSA-trained canine teams attend a 10-week training at the Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio. The dogs are trained to detect explosive devices at transit facilities and on-board all types of vehicles. The MTS cars will provide the dogs a real-life environment in which to train. [Source: Metropolitan Transit System, October 4, 2016]

New New Orleans Streetcar Line to Begin Service

The board of the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority approved final routes for the new North Rampart Street-St. Claude Avenue streetcar line and surrounding bus routes in August, clearing the way for a fall service start.

The service changes signal a win-win situation for both bus riders and streetcar patrons, as proposals to cut downriver bus lines at the French Market and force riders to transfer to streetcars were rejected. "We heard from customers consistently that they want to get to Canal Street, particularly from the further-out neighborhoods in the Lower 9th Ward," said CJ Bright, director of planning and scheduling for Transdev, the private company that manages the RTA's operations. The agency's past practice of cutting off some bus lines short of Canal Street so as to boost streetcar ridership has been heavily criticized.

Crews were nearly finished laying down asphalt along the new streetcar line in August, Transdev spokeswoman Patrice Bell Mercadel reported. The RTA planned to run test cars on the line and train the operators so that the line would be finished sometime in fall. [Source: The Advocate, Baton Rouge, August 25, 2016]

Orange County Streetcar gets long awaited Funding

The planned Orange County Streetcar received a big boost in mid-August -- a \$28 million state grant that could in turn elevate its position for crucial federal New Starts funding. The OC Streetcar project "provides a clean mobility option through some of the most populated areas of the county," state transportation agency Secretary Brian Kelly said in a statement. The route will cover 4.1 miles from the Santa Ana Regional Transportation Center to a new transit hub at Harbor Boulevard and Westminster Avenue in Garden Grove.

Orange County Transportation Authority, the lead agency developing the OC Streetcar, was among 14 recipients of \$390 million in competitive grants from the California State Transportation Agency's Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program. The program is aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions through rail and transit investments.

For the OC Streetcar, receiving this award is "tremendously significant," said OCTA board member and Santa Ana Mayor Miguel Pulido. "It's just another vote of confidence from an outside entity encouraging us to move forward and do the right thing – build the streetcar".

Pulido said the state grant "is only going to strengthen our position" for federal New Starts program funds. President Barack Obama already included \$125 million in his budget for the streetcar back in February. The streetcar carries a \$279 million price tag. [Source: The Orange County Register, August 17, 2016]

New Swedish Streetcars to come from Bombardier and Vossloh-Kiepe

Göteborgs Spårvägar AB has awarded a contract for 40 low-floor streetcars to a consortium consisting of Bombardier and Vossloh Kiepe. The order includes an option for another 60 vehicles.

The three-part vehicles, which are about 33 metres long and 2.65 metres wide, will be delivered in both unidirectional and bidirectional configurations (30 vehicles are unidirectional and 10 bidirectional). Each streetcar will be equipped with three motor bogies, CCTV, air conditioning in the driver's cab and in the passenger compartment as well as a state-of-the-art passenger information system.

The first vehicles are to be delivered and put into passenger service in 2019. [Source: Vossloh-Kiepe GmbH, October 12, 2016]

There Ain't Nothin' Like a Tram Parade!

Every year, the city of Moscow, Russia holds a Tram Parade to showcase its collection of vintage and modern tramcars. Like the trolleybus parades that the city is known for, the tram parades draw huge throngs of onlookers, as historic and modern day tramcars file past, each painstakingly polished and detailed to look its best. The Moscow Tram Parade is unparalleled for the sheer variety of rolling stock. We present 117 Years of Moscow Trams in Pictures, courtesy of Аркадий Гершман [livejournal.com].

