

Bus Transit Update

Bus Rapid Transit | International Transit Conf. in the Works

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

The US government program to stimulate implementation of Bus Rapid Transit operations is gaining momentum, according to sources in Washington.

The **Federal Transit Administration** (FTA) is continuing to seek new members for its BRT Consortium, which is holding regular coordination meetings, and FTA funding is being provided to some consortium members to perform early BRT planning.

The BRT concept represents a loose grouping of techniques which enable buses in urban settings to flow more smoothly and consistently than the average surrounding street traffic. Examples of approaches used include traffic signal priority, exclusive lanes, and electronic guidance.

Las Vegas has emerged as a new player on the scene — transit officials there have a strong interest in an exclusive-lane bus operation on the busy boulevards of “The Strip.” Depending on rights-of-way and other considerations, they may elect to implement an electronically guided bus approach.

Who will be first in the U.S. to go with electronic guidance? This approach is being implemented in Europe and marketed in the U.S. by several players. One authoritative source looks to **Hartford, Connecticut** as an early implementor — they are on a fast track to develop bus service on a former rail right-of-way; the relatively small amount

of lateral space may require guided steering in order to offer full-speed service. Others moving in this direction are the **Dulles Corridor** (Washington, DC); **Eugene, Oregon**; and **Boston, Massachusetts**.

ASCE and APTA Plan Reprise to 1999 International Transit Conference

The **American Society of Civil Engineers** (ASCE) and the **American Public Transit Association** (APTA) have begun planning efforts on a major international conference to examine successful transit operations worldwide.

This would be the second such event; the first was held in Miami, Florida in March 1999 and drew about 200 transit professionals. Cities such as Tokyo, London, Beijing, Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Chicago, and Los Angeles provided in-depth presentations on their operational approach, challenges, innovations, and successful technology introductions. The conference was regarded by attendees as “very informative.”

The next conference is now being planned for October 2001 at a venue in the U.S. — most likely Washington, DC or New York City. Organizers envision future conferences to be held about every other year, with the venue for 2003 moving overseas.