

Edmonton Trolley Coalition Bulletin



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Trolleybus Study still in the Works

Study to go to Council for direction/decision in 2004; Citizens remain concerned about future

Back in July and August, press coverage indicated that the Department of Asset Management and Public Works was intent on presenting a review of the city's transit fleet to City Council as part of the deliberations on the 2004 Budget. The intent, as reported at that time, was to propose operating cost savings by ending trolleybus operations, dismantling the 130 km of trolley infrastructure and moving to an all-diesel bus fleet. A "quick" study was to be ready by November for Council's 2004 budget deliberations.

In September, the U.S. consulting firm of Booz, Allen and Hamilton was contracted to complete a study of the trolleybus system. Although press coverage indicates the motivation for the study as identifying cost savings, a report presented to City Council's Transportation and Public Works Committee on September 16th states the study will be "comprehensive" and include an assessment of such issues as environmental impact, routing, etc. It was indicated at the Edmonton Transit System Advisory Board's meeting on September 29th that the study would present several different scenarios for the future, such as an all-diesel system and a trolley system of approximately the current size.

Although the study was initiated through the Department of Asset Management and Public Works, Wayne Mandryk, Manager of ETS, was recently named as the official spokesperson on the status of the study.

With the release of the 2004 budget in early November, it is now apparent that the operation of trolleybuses at the current level is funded in the budget. The consultants' study will not be completed in time to present to Council in November, indicative that perhaps it may be more detailed than originally anticipated. A public hearing planned for November 17th was cancelled. It is now anticipated that the consultants' study will be ready early in the New Year and that it will come forward to the Transportation and Public Works Committee of City Council at that time.

In the meantime, citizens concerned about the future of the "good neighbor" trolleybus are keeping a watchful eye, awaiting the results of the study. Edmonton's two transit advocacy groups, the *Edmonton Trolley Coalition* and the *Citizens for Better Transit*, remain firm in their position that the abandonment of the clean and quiet trolleybus in core areas of the city would be a step backwards, in particular in view of the growing population density in such areas. The issue of noise and

emissions from diesel buses in these areas is likely to be one of growing importance as more and more people choose to live in and near Downtown. If trolleybuses were abandoned for the sake of short-term cost savings, it is likely to be something the city would end up regretting in the future.

Howard Moscoe, Chairman of the Toronto Transit Commission, publicly announced that the abandonment of trolleybuses in Toronto was a “regrettable mistake”. (*Diesel Fuel News*, August 2000)
Let’s not make the same mistake in Edmonton!

Vancouver awards bid for 228 brand new trolleybuses

On Wednesday, October 29th, 2003, the Greater Vancouver Regional District’s TransLink Board voted unanimously to award a contract for the replacement of Vancouver’s trolleybus fleet to New Flyer Industries of Winnipeg. The contract is valued at \$273 million dollars and is for 188 40 foot low floor trolleybuses and 40 articulated low floor trolleybuses. Included in this is \$17 million for incidentals such as mechanics’ training, etc. There is an option for an additional 17 trolleybuses which can be exercised by the Board, if growing service demands should deem this necessary.

The decision should see new trolleybuses appearing on Vancouver streets sometime in 2006, following testing of a prototype. The New Flyer trolleys will utilize propulsion systems by Kiepe, one of the world’s foremost producers of electric traction equipment. The designs will be based on current New Flyer low floor diesel designs, but with some appearance and technical modifications.

The other competitive bidder on the contract was Czech based Neoplan/Skoda. They had offered 245 trolleybuses for approximately \$31 million less. However, the TransLink Board opted for the New Flyer bid, citing it was the best deal for the region.

Vancouver opened a 0.8 km extension of its 13 route trolley system into Stanley Park in September.



The “quiet revolution in public transport”, aka the trolleybus, began service into Vancouver’s Stanley Park on Labour Day, opening a new 0.8 km extension to the Vancouver system. The quiet, zero emission trolleybuses now bring visitors past the Rose Garden and into the park as far as the Children’s Zoo. Less than two months later, Vancouver’s TransLink Board announced the tender was awarded for 228 brand new trolleybuses. (E. Filiatrault)

WORLD TROLLEYBUS NEWS

Trolleybuses hold key to reliable transport for Moscow: With over 1,600 trolleybuses in service on approximately 90 routes, Moscow, Russia continues to be the world's largest operator of electric trolleys. Nicknamed "soldiers of the streets", the city is proud of the service which these vehicles provide to Moscovites. In Moscow, neither sleet nor snow nor torrential rains prevent the trolleybuses from making their appointed rounds. Even during a fierce rainstorm this past summer which left streets flooded, automobiles stranded and necessitated the closure of many shops and stores, Moscow's trolleybuses continued to operate.



"Soldiers of the Streets": An abandoned car drifts afloat on a flooded Moscow street after torrential rains drenched the Russian capital earlier this year. Undaunted by the flood waters, one of Moscow's trolleys proceeds on its way, as commuters escape the rising water by standing on benches inside bus shelters. (Courtesy R. DeArmond, July 2003)

Athens orders new trolleybuses: Following the successful replacement of Athen's previous trolley fleet with new trolleybuses built by VanHool/Kiepe, a further 131 new Neoplan/Kiepe trolleybuses will be ordered at EUR 63 million. The order is for 91 standard two-axle plus 40 articulated vehicles.

Delhi, India considers introducing trolleybuses: The Indian city is actively considering building a trolleybus system, to be equipped with a fleet of low floor, air-conditioned vehicles. Particulate pollution from diesel-powered vehicles is a concern in India's larger centers, to the extent that the Indian government banned all diesel powered public transport last year. The alternative power sources of choice are compressed natural gas and electricity.

Testing of first trolleybus for Rome completed: With a total of three trolleybus routes in the planning and the first already under construction, Rome's first trolleybus, a product of the Hungarian Ganz Transelektro, has now successfully completed its testing phase. The low floor, articulated vehicles, of which 30 are on order, measure 18 metres in length and will carry a load of about 76 passengers. They are equipped with NiMH traction batteries that can provide a power supply of 480 Volts to allow off-wire movement; this auxiliary power supply is sufficient to propel the vehicle on grades of up to 12%, according to the manufacturer's specifications.

Arnhem, Netherlands opens new transit complex: Following driver-training in February, a brand new bus station complex has been in use since earlier this year which includes new trolleybus bays, fixing the trolleybus firmly in the future public transport scene in the municipality. Arnhem proudly calls itself "the trolleybus city" and uses its trolleybus system as a promotional tool for both the city and its transit system.

Winterthur, Switzerland to reinvest in trolleys: As a result of public concerns about exhaust particles and noise, Winterthur City Council has decided to reinvest in trolleybuses. Subject to the necessary financial support from the Zürich PTE, ten new articulated trolleybuses will be ordered in 2004 to replace aging members of the fleet. Overhead wiring on the Storchenbrücke bridge, which was removed in 1995, will be reinstated, and service on this route will be reinstated with two new 40-foot trolleybuses to be included in the order. The total cost is estimated at 3.5m Swiss Francs.

New trolleys arrive in San Francisco, as MUNI announces trolley expansion plans: The San Francisco Municipal Railway has issued a 20-year draft plan for securing and expanding the future of the trolleybus system there. 33 new articulated trolleybuses are to enter service before the end of this year, adding to a fleet of around 400 trolleys. There are five trolleybus route extensions planned for 2005-6 and three diesel-operated routes will be electrified in the next ten years, with 6 more beyond that, according to the plan document.

New trolley fleet now in place in Seattle : The programme to convert the fleet of 102 AM General trolleybuses of 1979 vintage into 100 Gillig trolleybuses is now complete, providing the city with new trolley vehicles at reduced cost. King Country Metro plans to convert 46 of 235 dual mode articulated trolley/diesel vehicles currently used in its downtown bus tunnel to pure trolley operation. These will replace a similarly sized fleet of aging articulated trolleybuses serving routes in the University area. A light rail project is underway in Seattle which will eventually see the downtown bus tunnel converted to electric rail operation. Replacement of Seattle's main trolley power substation, located in the downtown area, was completed in November, ensuring the reliability of Metro trolleybus service for years to come.

WIND POWERED ELECTRIC BUS SYSTEM OPENS IN SWEDEN

Europe's newest trolleybus system hailed as starting point for movement toward better public transport in the 21st century

The Official opening of the Landskrona electric trolleybus system took place on September 27, 2003. Driven by environmental concerns and a desire for high quality public transport, the community of Landskrona has decided that the only technology that answers their needs is electric trolleybuses. This small system spans only 3 km, but connects the town with a new railway station via a main corridor. Access to the bus maintenance and storage facility 0.9km away is unwired and is reached by using an onboard battery propulsion system.

The system went up quickly after the decision to go ahead was announced less than two years ago. The trolleybus infrastructure has been successfully integrated into the street furniture. For example street lighting standards are shared with the trolleybuses. Power to the system is provided 365 days a year by a wind turbine. Excess generated power is fed into the Swedish grid when demand for trolley power is low, and power is drawn from the grid when necessary. Emissions for trolleybus operation are thereby nominal, making the trolleybus a clear environmental winner.

The Landskrona system is the first trolleybus system in Sweden since the 1960s and as such is expected to become a model for other municipalities to follow. The opening ceremony in Landskrona was attended by the Swedish Environment Minister and there was a substantial international presence at the opening.

The construction of the Landskrona system followed the publication of the report *New Concepts for Trolley Buses in Sweden* by the Swedish Transport and Communications Research Board in December 2000. This Report concluded that although light rail transport systems were having a renaissance, they had expensive infrastructure requirements. Modern trolleybuses offered the same degree of zero emission in cities, for less investment cost and with more flexibility. According to the report, even in countries where power is generated from fossil fuels, trolleybuses still exhibited considerable environmental advantages over the best commercially available diesel-powered buses. The report concluded that in many cases, trolleybuses could even provide levels of service similar to light rail if operated on segregated rights-of-way, but with less intensive capital investment. An analysis of the social economic cost for trolleybuses in Sweden indicated that substantial investments in infrastructure for trolleybuses would result in social economic gain. [I. Bell, TBus Group]



“Landskrona has the environment in mind” reads the slogan on this state-of-the-art Hungarian-built trolleybus that made its debut on September 27th on Europe’s and Sweden’s newest trolley system. (B. Lake/TBus Group)

We get letters . . .

Trolley buses help ensure balanced transportation, decrease dependence on oil

The news about city managers in Edmonton proposing the abandonment of trolley buses in your city has caught my attention. I would direct you to the American Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reports in deciding whether to continue to operate trolley buses. Rail transit and rubber-tired trolley buses are the cleanest and most efficient forms of transport.

The EPA has some dire warnings about the supply of oil and other petro-chemical forms of energy used to power our transport. We produce only 40% of what we use in our oil/gasoline transportation. Should any of our outside sources tap out, we and the world will be in desperate need without help at any cost. In my opinion, the petroleum industry is very unstable. Stateside, the pricing can change from ten to fifteen cents per gallon overnight. Any excuse to change pricing is valid. If the barrel price goes up or down a few cents per barrel, the retail market reflects that immediately. These price changes are effected in the Middle East. (That oil, in a refined state for use, will actually not reach us for retail sale for months.)

This has become a real political football in the U.S. as the petroleum, automotive, truck and bus plus the rubber tire industries continue to re-assure us that their way is the only mode of land travel needed in the future. It amounts to the same group which began to buy up streetcar companies in the late thirties and continued to do so after WW II. The result was basically two-fold. We have now polluted our air in the major industrial areas of the world and secondly, the population has adopted the automobile as its prime mode of transportation. To assure an enduring program, our national administration adopted a new National Freeway and Tollway system in the 1950’s. The cost is in the trillions of dollars annually, but no one wants to make reference to that.

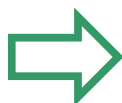
Meanwhile, Amtrak struggles to maintain what it has and get what it needs. Congress has long maintained that Amtrak must become self-supporting, which is impossible considering the vast competitive mode of travel on the freeways, funded by Federal grants covering up to 90% of the cost of construction.

Amtrak is asking for some 8+ billion dollars over the next seven years to maintain what it has and to replace what is already worn out. That amounts to about 1.2 billion dollars per year in basic support. That cost is just about what it costs to rebuild *just one* of the many major interchanges in various cities which are also worn out. Yes, that's right: the cost of *ONE* interchange rebuilding. I should mention that the cost of resurfacing a freeway is one million dollars per mile on an average of every ten years. That is where our tax dollars are going.

We have been left with little choice but to buy an automobile and pay for the fuel, regardless of its cost. Railroad passenger and freight services have been decimated, as have the airlines. If your origin and destination are not served by them, you have the choice of riding the long distance bus or driving yourself. But, then you can always rent an automobile at your destination to get where you are going. Get the picture?

Balanced transportation is needed. Continue with electrically powered vehicles!

Don L. Leistikow, Industrial Traffic Manager (retired)
New Berlin, Wisconsin



Progress



Surveys show Citizens and Riders in Edmonton Prefer Electric Trolleybuses!

Downtown High Density Development Demands Clean, Quiet, Quality Public Transport!

Surely a responsible City won't let the cleanest and quietest bus on its streets disappear in a puff of diesel smoke!

How can Edmontonians support the retention of trolleybuses?

Some suggestions:

Become involved in your city through organizations like the *Edmonton Trolley Coalition* (www.geocities.com/trolley_coalition), *Citizens for Better Transit* (www.bettertransit.ab.ca) or other quality of life oriented groups

Talk to your friends, neighbors and relatives or write a letter to the editor of a local paper

Call or write your City Councillor or the Mayor's Office; Contact the Citizens Action Centre at 496-8200, by fax at 496-8210 or by electronic mail at cacentre@edmonton.ca

Speak to City Council when this issue arises at Council or Committee meetings early in 2004. For further information on how to sign up to speak to Council or when meetings are held, check the City of Edmonton Web site at http://www.gov.edmonton.ab.ca/corp_services/city_clerk/ or call 496-8175

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