

NEW JERSEY

NJ Community Shuttle Program

In the third round of the Community Shuttle Program grants, 12 New Jersey communities will receive 18-passenger mini-buses—leased at no charge—to operate commuter shuttles to train stations and bus corridors during peak hours. The mini-buses were awarded under New Jersey Transit Community Shuttle Program, a creative approach to improving passenger access to public transportation in New Jersey.

“With ridership at record high levels, the Community Shuttle Program is more important than ever,” said NJ Transit Assistant Executive Director Jim Redeker. “By operating these shuttles, the communities will be providing a vital link to public transportation, without requiring residents to get in their cars.”

The mini-buses, include a wheelchair lift and two wheelchair securements, heating and air conditioning systems, reading lamps, and overhead package racks.



During off-peak hours and on weekends, the program recipients may use the vehicles for other community-based transportation services such as senior citizen or recreational transportation.

Currently, 22 towns operate community shuttles, granted in the first and second rounds of the program.

njtransit.com

NEW YORK

Giving New York City Buses a Fighting Chance

Upper Eastside Assembly Member Pete Grannis recently reintroduced a bill authorizing the MTA and New York City Department of Transportation to use automated, bus mounted and roadside cameras to issue summonses to motorists illegally parked in bus stops or driving in bus lanes. Grannis developed the original legislation with Transportation Alternatives and the Strap-hangers Campaign after learning of the immense success London has had with bus enforcement cameras. London’s 900 bus mounted cameras and 500 roadside cameras issue 100,000 summonses a year and have dramatically improved bus speeds and reliability. Assembly Introduction 1832 would improve current bus service and pave the way for enforcement of planned Bus Rapid



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Transit corridors. BRT combines the speed, reliability and amenities of rail-based rapid transit systems with the flexibility of buses.

The next round of public hearings on the BRT plans for New York City will likely be held this spring. The MTA anticipates rolling out the plans for the BRT pilot corridors by August 2006.

mta.nyc.ny.us and transalt.org

BRONX

More Ball Parking = More Traffic and Pollution for South Bronx

The new Yankee Stadium plans have been drawing some heated opposition from area residents in the Bronx. Among community concerns voiced outside a recent City Planning Commission meeting about the new stadium, is the increased traffic the stadium’s increased parking would bring. Current plans call for a 72% increase in Yankee parking, in four new garages to be built in existing parks in the stadium area, as well as an additional 1,200 parking spaces at the nearby Gateway Mall center which will be available for game patrons. “In New York City, parking begets driving,” said Jon Orcutt, director of the Tri-State Transportation Campaign. “Where people have a choice between driving and mass transit, the availability of parking is a key determinant of how to travel.”

“At a time when everyone in the suburbs is talking about smart growth and planning transit-oriented development, you would think the City of New York could come up with a better plan for Yankees fans and the people of the South Bronx,” said Majora Carter, executive director of Sustainable South Bronx, an environmental justice advocacy group. Carter noted that the long-promised Yankee Stadium Metro-North Railroad station had fallen out of the Yankees plan.

“New York state subsidies for gridlock-

causing stadium parking garages would be far better spent on the Metro-North station. The station would help the South Bronx economy seven-days-a-week as well as provide efficient travel to the stadium,” said Lukas Herbert, a professional planner and member of the local community board.

Other community groups are also calling for the creation of a new Metro-North station on the western line and the rehabilitation of the Melrose station on the eastern line, advertising it as an alternative to driving and providing a shuttle bus from the station to the stadium.

tstc.org

TAXI

No Wonder They Call Them Hacks

The back seat of a taxi is one of the worst places to be for exposure to ultrafine particulate pollution, a new study has revealed.

People on buses and those riding bikes are also exposed to a lot of the pollutant, while pedestrians and, ironically, those in private cars, are exposed to the least.

Researchers from Imperial College London, UK, tracked exposure to fine particulate pollution second by second as volunteers traveled around a test area along a stretch of Marylebone Road, a busy street in the city.

The researchers were interested in exposure



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to ultrafine particles, which studies suggest might pose an especially serious health hazard.

Overall, the heaviest exposure came from taking a cab, second heaviest was inside of a bus and the lowest exposure was inside of a private car.

Surbjit Kaur, the exposure analyst who led the research, says cabs might have such high exposures compared to cars because they are in use for so much of the day, or because they were recently used by a smoker.

Cyclists, despite generating no pollution, inhale more than their fair share of it, more than twice as much as the driver of a private car.

Walkers seem relatively well off. However, simply crossing the street could cause particulate levels to spike dramatically. Passing a cigarette smoker on the sidewalk was even worse.

NewScientist.com