PATH/LEX: POLITICS IN PLAY AS MEDIA SNORE AWAY
“When the topic comes up somewhere, call us,” more than one media outlet has admonished NJ-ARP throughout 2003. Well, the topic – a PATH link to the Lexington Avenue No. 6 subway in New York – did come up, courtesy of NJ-ARP. at two PATH hearings involving a "permanent" transit hub in lower Manhattan. The press either ignored the two hearings (one in Jersey City, the other in Manhattan) and/or overlooked NJ-ARP’s testimony – a matter of public record. Indeed, one newspaper ignored NJ-ARP’s very presence, noting only one person testified at the Jersey City gathering – an out-and-out error and omission. It’s a good thing...

Political Players, At Last, Have Begun Evaluating PATH/Lex: Credit most of that “interest” to Congressman Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.) of Manhattan, who met with members of NJ-ARP and sister organization ESPA, the Empire State Passengers Association, at a meeting August 19. Nadler quickly has made it clear he gets it – he sees PATH/Lex’s potential for true, improved, interstate transport and commerce, benefitting both New York and New Jersey. Taking their cue from the powerful House rep, others, including from PATH parent Port Authority of New York & New Jersey (PA) and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), suddenly are willing to talk. While that’s progress, it’s only a start, since...

Territorial ‘Fiefdoms’ Still Hold Sway over Bistate, Multi-Agency Links: PATH, the PA, MTA, and even New Jersey Transit are far with re-creating the 20th century status quo in Manhattan – separate lines connected by walkways and “capped” with a nice, new transit-hub building – because it’s the easiest way. It sidesteps turf wars, clashing FTA/FRA oversight, bistate headaches, fare collection disputes. It also sidesteps progress – especially since NJ-ARP argues the physical link can be built now, the political nightmares resolved after that. (Or, turned around, the lead time for politics is long.) Most maddening is the...

Sound of Silence from New Jersey Interests for East Side Access: New York officials protect their turf, but they at least are willing to discuss PATH/Lex, even if from a parochial, protectionist viewpoint. And the New Yorkers note – sometimes pointedly – that NJ-ARP is the only New Jersey entity of any kind to push PATH/Lex. That’s not quite true; the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA), a metropolitan planning organization covering 13 New Jersey counties, has played a supportive role. But New Jersey state officials, from NJDOT on down, are abrogating any interest in a golden interstate transit opportunity. The opportunity is there, the money is there, and a true interstate transit hub is at hand – minus substantial New Jersey input. The New Jersey press appears not to notice.

BLUE RIBBON TRANSPORT COMMISSION PLAYS HIDE AND SEEK
Want to offer citizen input to Gov. Jim McGreevey’s “Blue Ribbon Transportation Panel” for the common good? Good luck. NJ-ARP Director James Ciacciarelli went 0-for-2 in trying to testify. The panel’s first session, scheduled for Monday, September 22 during the day, was virtually inaccessible by transit and at hours not convenient to most working people. No matter – the meeting was cancelled, presumably due to after-effects of Hurricane Isabel, and no makeup date has yet been offered. “I checked the papers and the state Web site but no mention [was made] at all anywhere, not even on the DOT’s Web site front page,” Ciacciarelli notes. Undeterred, Ciacciarelli...

Repeated Attempt at Cherry Hill, and Denied Time to Testify: Again, transit options were limited; again, afternoon hours were inconvenient. But NJ-ARP’s Ciacciarelli arrived around 3:00 p.m. at the Cherry Hill Municipal Building, well within the window of 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. It wasn’t “early” enough; as he entered, Ciacciarelli was informed that the session had adjourned for oral testimony. NJ-ARP handed in written comments and was marked as “present.” As we go to press, the commission has revamped the hours for its remaining two sessions, further proscribing the potential for citizen input at Newark and New Brunswick. One wonders why the commission bothers, since the...

Current Date-Dance Leaves Transit Advocates More Left Out than Usual: Citizen advocacy groups should be represented on the commission itself, not struggling to guess the “right time” to voice input. Sure, New Jersey Future, champions of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), is part of the commission. But genuine grass-roots interests with longer track records, such as NJ-ARP or (as another example) the Tri-State Transportation Campaign, offered to serve on the commission and were politely ignored. The commission, of course, will be “shocked” if NJ-ARP and others are forced to tear flimsy “recommendations” to shreds.
EDITOR’S EYE-VIEW
NJT Parks ‘Back-to-Basics’ Patter, Eyeing Future Needs

Slowly, tentatively, and just above the radar, New Jersey Transit has begun floating trial balloons to its various constituents concerning rail improvement and (yes!) expansion.

It may be low key, but it’s a sea change from NJT’s overly hyped “Back to Basics” posture – and NJ-ARP is encouraged.

Indeed, the railfan community, in typical yes-or-no, yin/yang style, now believes NJ Transit will commence numerous projects in this locale or that, over-reacting to NJT’s resurrected sales pitch for capital expansion.

At NJ-ARP, we’re more sanguine – it is, after all, a sales pitch – but we too are encouraged by NJT’s change of heart, and its thinking, however preliminary, for the longer term.

Most of the attention was captured by the Montclair/Boonton Line. On September 24, NJT Executive Director George Warrington, addressing Morris County freeholders, espoused the merits of electrifying west of Montclair to Dover, and perhaps west of Dover, in order to upgrade service and eliminate transfers. He also expressed strong interest in rehabilitating the Lackawanna Cut-Off for passenger service to northwestern New Jersey points, and a Mt. Arlington station to tap park-and-ride customers.

Since NJT’s chief lives in the area (Mendham), the print media, along with numerous railfans, took note. The stance on both the Cut-Off and Boonton electrification does confirm what Warrington told NJ-ARP last year, and NJ-ARP supports Warrington’s vision for the line. Upgrades and electrification certainly transcend the circumscribed and limiting “Back to Basics” philosophy.

Much less visible – but perhaps more telling – were statements by NJT’s Art Silber, chief of NJT’s capital planning, at another meeting September 24, this one in Burlington City before planners and political officials from Burlington, Mercer, Hunterdon and Middlesex counties. Silber made a point of supporting numerous rail capital projects, including Monmouth-Ocean-Middlesex (MOM) rail and – the biggest surprise – extension of S/NJLR/ to the State House in downtown Trenton.

These items all were featured even as NJT hammered at the big capital prize and need: Access to the Region’s Core, something even NJT has acknowledged all along is indispensable to the health of the NJ Transit rail system. As for most of the other projects, north or south, few are likely to advance anytime soon, though, some (like MOM) are crawling ahead. But that’s not the point. The point is that NJT is looking beyond “Back to Basics,” and acknowledging it must do so for the good of the state.

Precedent established at NJT’s birth somehow convinced the corporation that pro-train cheerleading is off-limits, or somehow unseemly and done clandestinely at best. It’s an attitude NJ-ARP has never accepted as a given; there’s no reason why NJ Transit can’t, or shouldn’t, tout its mission and its necessity as a corporation to give the Garden State a fighting chance to avoid strangling itself with congestion.

LRT Deadlines: One Is Set, One Slip-Slides

Proud-parent New Jersey Transit has made no bones bragging about the next installment of Hudson-Bergen Light Rail Transit (HBLRT) in the offing, and when. Look for service to extend south to 22nd Street Station, Bayonne, on Saturday, November 15.

Many NJ-ARP members will be elsewhere that day, specifically at the Camden shops and yards of Southern New Jersey Light Rail Transit (S/NJLR), optimistically celebrating the system’s pending birth, which should occur – sometime. NJT wants a “perfect” birth. It plans to announce a “snappy” name (the choice we heard fails to fit the bill) and, more important, an opening date of its own. Such a date will be identified November 12, NJT Transit now says.

That’s clever marketing – choose a day to announce the opening day. In fact, NJT could form an informal pool to handle the speculation. Will it still be late fall (Dec. 20 still qualifies)? Or will it be later still, say in 2004 as financial documents uncovered by New Jersey media suggest? Will NJT allow Cinderella to attend the ball?

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Snappier, secret name considered for light rail line

By KATHLEEN CANNON
Burlington County Times

TRENTON - SNJLRTS. Just rolls off the tongue, doesn’t it?

No?

NJ Transit doesn’t think so either.

So the days are numbered for the name Southern New Jersey Light Rail Transit System, or SNJLRTS for short, a transit official confirmed yesterday.

A new name for the riverfront project, one that is punchy and more marketable, is in the works, according to Lynn Bowersox of NJ Transit.

It won’t be publicized, though, until the state is ready to announce the start of service along the Camden-to-Trenton route. That date is unknown, other than the vague assurance from state officials that the train will start to roll “in the fall.”

The $1.1 billion project has been known as SNJLRTS since its origins in the mid-1990s. Transit officials decided to change the awkward moniker to something catchier to help boost expected anemic ridership.

“We want to create a name that’s easier to remember,” said Bowersox.

The agency is keeping the development of a new name a tightly guarded secret. Two NJ Transit marketing experts clammed up yesterday when asked about the name change.

Train observers, however, aren’t nearly as shy about offering suggestions.

Douglas Bowen of the New Jersey Association of Rail Passengers offered the CAT Train (Camden and Trenton) or the 3R Line (River Rail Runner).

Don Nigro of the Delaware Valley Association of Rail Passengers, a southern New Jersey rail advocacy group, suggested TCT, the Trenton Camden Trolley.

“The old name is way too long,” he said.

A noted southern New Jersey wordsmith said NJ Transit is on the right track. “No one ever produced an auto and called it the turtle. You pick a name that will make people think of the qualities you want them to respond to,” said William Lutz, professor of English at Rutgers University in Camden and author of “Doublespeak” and “Doublespeak Defined.”

“What it will do is, temporarily, allow for a jazzy marketing campaign, but between image and reality, reality always wins out. If it’s called the supersonic transport but it’s slow, people won’t ride it again,” he said.

One politician couldn’t help but take the bait when asked his alternative to SNJLRTS.

“Call it the ‘$72 Million Dollar a Year Down the Drain Thanks to Diane Allen and the Republican Party Train,’” Assemblyman Herb Conaway, D-7th of Delanco said, referring to its annual combined operating and debt-service cost.

Allen, a Republican state senator from Edgewater Park who also represents the riverfront 7th District, poo-pooed Conaway’s critique.

“If he thinks jobs are unimportant, or seniors, the disabled and kids riding the train are unimportant, he should continue to throw mud, but I think he ought to reconsider,” she said.

Email: kcannon@phillyBurbs.com

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**NJ-ARP: NJT PROJECTS (BEHIND) SCHEDULE**

SNJLRT’s opening day continues to slide away as New Jersey Transit jockeys to balance fiscal niceties, legal problems, and (apparently) last-minute negotiations with freight railroads to expand the system’s hours of operation. It’s not alone: sighting those sidings for the Pascack Valley Line remains an exercise in seeming futility; the deadline here, too, continues to recede.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>CURRENT DEADLINE</th>
<th>ORIGINAL DEADLINE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Under construction</td>
<td>Spring, 2004</td>
<td>2003</td>
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<tr>
<td>HBLRT/22nd St.</td>
<td>Under construction</td>
<td>Nov. 15, 2003</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HBLRT/7th North Bergen</td>
<td>Under construction</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNJLRT</td>
<td>Operations testing</td>
<td>Late 2003</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pascack Valley</td>
<td>Sidings designed</td>
<td>Late 2004/early 2005</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NJ Transit adding 10 trains to provide 2,000 more seats

By JOE MALINCONICO, Star-Ledger Staff

Still can’t get a seat on an NJ Transit train?

Things may get better by the end of the month.

Starting Oct. 26, NJ Transit will add 10 new trains to its rail schedules and reshuffle others, changes officials say will produce an extra 2,000 seats during peak periods.

“It’s a sensible, practical, step-by-step series of additions that we applaud,” said Doug Bowen, vice president of the New Jersey Association of Railroad Passengers.

The new trains are part of NJ Transit’s preparations for the weekday debut of the massive Secaucus Junction Station. That $600 million station, which has been open on weekends for about a month, will allow commuters to make transfers between the agency’s main rail lines.

But for the new station to work out, transit officials need to make sure there will be enough seats on the trains for riders to make the transfer. On weekdays, NJ Transit expects about 7,500 riders to switch trains at Secaucus.

Over the past 17 months, NJ Transit has added 50 trains to its weekday schedules, providing an extra 20,000 seats for a rail system that had been struggling with overcrowding.

“There are very few trains where people are forced to stand, where there aren’t enough seats,” NJ Transit Executive Director George Warrington said. “Generally speaking, those who are standing now are people who choose to stand.”

Officials said they have been conducting train-by-train surveys to figure out how to deploy their passenger cars to provide seats where needed.

The railroad’s capacity has gained its biggest boost from the shipment of 127 new passenger cars over the past two years. Also, crews turn their trains around and put them back into service more quickly, while cars on less congested trains have been switched to the more crowded ones.

Once Secaucus station opens, officials said they expect to adjust schedules even more.

The 10 new weekday trains are:

**Northeast Corridor Line:**

* Train No.3826 will depart Trenton at 7:17 a.m., make limited stops and arrive at New York Penn Station at 8:27 a.m.
* Train No.3916 will depart Trenton at 6:22 a.m. and express to New York, arriving at 7:30 a.m.

**North Jersey Coast Line:**

* New train No.3500 will depart Perth Amboy at 6:17 a.m., make local stops and arrive in New York at 7:13 a.m. This will allow Train No.3210, the 5:32 a.m. departure from Long Branch that arrives in New York at 6:54 a.m., to go express between Woodbridge and Newark Penn Station.

**Pascack Valley Line:**

* Train No.1600 will depart Spring Valley, N.Y., at 5:14 a.m, make all local stops and arrive at Hoboken at 6:20 a.m.
* Train No.1614 will depart Spring Valley at 7:24 a.m, make limited stops and arrive in Hoboken at 8:32 a.m.
* Train No.1623 will depart Hoboken at 3:57 p.m., make local stops and arrive in Spring Valley at 5:08 p.m.
* Train No.1637 will depart Hoboken at 6:22 p.m. and arrive in Spring Valley at 7:28 p.m.

**Port Jervis Line:**

* Train No.50 will depart Port Jervis, N.Y., at 5:55 a.m., operate as an express and arrive Hoboken 8:01 a.m.
* Train No.58 will leave from Middletown, N.Y., at 10:31 a.m. and arrive in Hoboken at 12:13 p.m.
* Train No.59 will depart Hoboken at 6:08 p.m. and arrive in Port Jervis at 8:15 p.m.
GUEST SPOT #1
by George Barsky

[The following material was sent as an open letter to Montgomery County, Md.-area officials and media on October 3 by rail activist George Barsky, and is reprinted with his permission (our thanks). NJ-ARP has edited some specific geographic references from the text deliberately in order to emphasize the text’s overall applications to the ongoing BRT vs. LRT debate, which now has begun within New Jersey. Mr. Barsky’s letter, in NJ-ARP’s view, vividly outlines BRT proponents do not come out directly against LRT, but their comments are usually couched in terms to raise doubts in your mind about LRT and reinforce their position on BRT.

In discussions about frequency of service they try to imply that rail service must be spaced (headway) 10 minutes or more apart while bus headway could be approximately 2 minutes. LRT headway can be anything required to meet service levels. They imply that better service is provided by buses because of the necessity to frequent to meet service levels. LRT can meet those same service levels and increase the carrying capacity 2-4 times that of a bus and only require a single operator. Also, LRT avails itself of coupling additional cars together when needed - or uncoupling when not. Buses do not couple together.

In discussions about costs of LRT vs. BRT it is well known that the life cycle of rail vehicles far exceeds that of buses. If we must take extreme cases, New Orleans still operates trolleys - not as sightseers but as bonafide transit having high patronage - with vehicles built in the 1920's. In Milan, Italy, which has a very large tram network operating through the densest part of the city, there are more than 300 trams in daily operation in superb condition, all built in 1927. San Francisco MUNI operates a fleet of historic trolleys dating from the mid 1950’s on Market Street (not to be confused with the famous ancient cable cars). New Orleans, San Francisco, and Milan also have brand new trams or LRT, as well. Buses can’t touch that record. But BRT proponents wish you to believe that buses are more cost effective than LRT. That is patently false.

BRT proponents imply that BRT is a modern concept. In fact, it is not and has never done well, and has always proved to be at least as costly as LRT. They imply that it is being implemented in many places. In fact, it is not. LRT is being implemented and planned in many places. Cities like Houston, Dallas, Denver, Minneapolis, Portland, Hoboken, and Salt Lake City have brand new LRT systems or are in final construction stages. Cities like Phoenix, Louisville, Tucson, and many others are in the planning. There is virtually no or very little BRT in actual construction or use by BRT proponents wants you to believe that real estate values are enhanced the same way with BRT or LRT. False. You have buses all around now. What have they done to really increase property values? Very little to nothing. But, when LRT is put in place, virtually everybody wants to be accessible to it - both for convenience and increased property values.

BRT proponents want you to believe that LRT requires completely independent rights of way and requires expensive stations with pedestrian overpasses. False. Even the Baltimore LRT and MARC Brunswick line uses at grade pedestrian crossings to get from one platform side to the other. LRT inherently is street compatible. That’s the key feature - compatibility with other automotive traffic. LRT operates better within its own right-of-way, but is completely capable of operating in the middle of the street, along the paved curb line, or any unpaved portion of the street or completely independent right of way on, above or below the ground. LRT is capable of navigating sharp street corners, as well. LRT and existing local buses can operate within the same transit lanes on a street. There is no reason not to consider LRT operations on the streets without the need for a separate and expensive right of way. The notion of separate-ness is too expensive, misleading and unnecessary.

BRT proponents would have you believe that concrete (asphalt) busways are as pleasant as LRT on green grass transitways with shrubs, flowers, and trees planted alongside. LRT greenways actually add beauty and value to the neighborhoods they pass through, not so with BRT. LRT greenways lend themselves to inclusion of pleasant and safer hiker/bike paths alongside.

These are only some examples of why LRT is preferable to BRT. Buses just don’t cut it and there is ample data available to support that statement. LRT is the way to go if you want to see real improved transportation in an area, and improved property values and quality of life.

LRT is a viable, lasting, economical, desirable, and dependable mode. Don’t let BRT proponents dupe you into thinking otherwise.
GUEST SPOT #2
by NJ-ARP Members Joe Versaggi and Ralph Braskett

PATH CUTS MIDTOWN SERVICE AS PART OF EXCHANGE PLACE REOPENING
As part of the reopening of Exchange Place (EXPL) station on June 29, PATH cut service on the 33rd Street routes on weekday rush hours and daytime on Saturdays. It also eliminated through weekday service between Newark (NWK) and 33rd Street, replacing it with the traditional 33rd-Journal Square (JSQ) and interim EXPL-NWK service. The weekday service cuts and increased transfers were forced onto a larger number of riders, with delays and overcrowding the result, as reported in the press. PATH promised to partially rectify the rush hour headway problem, but the published schedules don’t reflect it. The assumption was that a significant amount of lower Manhattan-bound ridership would choose EXPL routes and a ferry transfer. The fact is EXPL ridership is minute by any standard. Nothing at all appeared about the drastic Saturday service cut. We now have rush hour-style overcrowding, even on weekends, on the 33rd-JSQ route, anemic “ghost” trains on the two EXPL routes, and Holland/Lincoln tunnel crossing counts continuing to spiral upwards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Headway thru 6/28/03</th>
<th>Headway 6/29/03 &amp; after</th>
<th>% Change in service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WEEKDAY PEAK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33rd-HOB</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
<td>6 minutes</td>
<td>-17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33rd-NWK</td>
<td>4 minutes</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
<td>-20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33rd-JSQ</td>
<td>4 minutes</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
<td>-20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NWK-JSQ segment</td>
<td>4 minutes</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEEKDAY PEAK</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSQ-HOB</td>
<td>8 minutes</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
<td>+50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPL-NWK</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
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<td>+50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPL-HOB</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SATURDAY 9AM-7PM</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>-33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 min. headway = 15 trains per hour; 5 min. headway = 12 trains per hour; therefore cut = 20% 
6 min. headway = 10 trains per hour; therefore cut = 17% 
8 min. headway = 7.5 trains per hour; therefore increase = 50% 
10 min. headway = 6 trains per hour; 15 min. headway = 4 trains per hour; therefore cut = 33%

PATH management seems unconcerned about the imbalance of simultaneous operation of overcrowded trains on the 33rd Street line with ghost trains on the EXPL routes, often with uniform train lengths and service intervals during the day and on weekends for the convenience of yard masters and dispatchers. The overcrowding causes economic losses to the region from fewer PATH trips and more car use, particularly on weekends. Changing Jersey City demographics mean far more ridership to Midtown and Greenwich Village on weekends.

So what’s the remedy? Some no-cost and low-cost resource allocation can help.

Reduce service on the EXPL routes in exchange for more on the 33rd-JSQ route. During weekday rush hours, increase the headway of the EXPL routes from 5 to 8 minutes; reduce the headway of the 33rd-JSQ route from 5 to 4 minutes with alternate trains extended to NWK. We do not accept the notion that both EXPL and 33rd trains each at 8-minute intervals cannot co-exist west of JSQ. Fifteen trains per hour is still far less than what was operated prior to 9/11/01.

If PATH’s unions refuse to run the 33rd-NWK service, remind them that a 34-minute run is not high by FRA standards. NJT still has capacity problems despite high fares during peak periods with the lack of WTC rail service and demand for the ferry substitute. Through service is highly desirable. On weekends between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., increase ghost train headways from 15 to 20 minutes; and decrease 33rd-JSQ headways from 15 to 10 minutes with a one-minute connections at JSQ, with connections held for three minutes.
‘Through-Running’ for NJ-NY, NJ-PA, Tops NJ-ARP/NJT Discussion

On Sept. 15, four NJ-ARP representatives met with New Jersey Transit Executive Director George Warrington and staff, and found agreement on one issue almost immediately: that of pursuing through-running service at New York-Penn Station.

Warrington, joined by NJT Vice President and General Manager of Rail Operations William B. Duggan, noted that NJT was studying the concept on the other end of its Northeast Corridor operations involving NJT and SEPTA; Warrington hopes for “more frequent and faster” services between Philadelphia and Hamilton, Princeton, Edison and Metropark. But the executive director was interested to hear of a meeting between NJ-ARP member George Haikalakis and the Bronx Borough President’s Deputy Director of Planning, discussing Metro-North service over the Hell Gate bridge and on to Penn Station, New York – and beyond. Warrington suggested a separate meeting with NJT Planning Director Rich Roberts to discuss the concept further.

Warrington still fears that an emphasis on through-running would “overly complicate the basic mission” of Access to the Region’s Core, which is the increase in trans-Hudson mobility. As such, he seeks to avoid any disagreement between NJT and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) over New York-Penn Station/Grand Central Terminal access. Warrington would prefer to “leverage” the tunnel project given plans by New York Mayor Bloomberg and Deputy Mayor Doctoroff to develop the west side of Manhattan in the mid 30’s.

NJT’s game plan

Warrington outlined NJT’s priorities as follows:

1.) Obtain congressional authorization for additional Hudson River tunnels;

2.) make clear that there is no conflict with the LIRR East Side Access (ESA) to Grande Central Terminal (major ARC expenditures will come at the end of the ESA project); and

3.) show that there is no competition for federal funds with the cross-Hudson freight tunnel championed by Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.). Nadler is seeking funding from a pot of money designated for “Projects of National Significance.”

NJT would also like access to West Side (Manhattan) yard facilities, but NJ-ARP Director Albert Papp urged Warrington to consider the extension of LIRR trains to Secaucus Junction Station to better utilize LIRR and NJT assets. NJT’s Duggan said the practical NEC train limit is approximately 23 trains per hour (optimum 25) and all slots are taken, rendering any LIRR train extension moot – at least prior to additional ARC tunnels being completed.

Portal Bridge remains an NEC weak link, Warrington told NJ-ARP, suggesting an elevated replacement. For the short term, NJT sees expansion of the “no open” policy to four hours each rush hour period (a.m. and p.m.), up from two hours each. Since 1993, NJT is running 51.2 percent more trains between 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. in the peak direction, and 87 percent more between 4:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. in the reverse direction. During the a.m. peak, the numbers are 62.9 percent and 62.5 percent more trains in the peak and reverse directions, respectively.

Arrow IIs have a future

NJ-ARP’s repeated inquires into the fate of NJT Arrow III cars got some answers during the meeting – including one surprise. Warrington said a moderate overhaul for the cars was a near-term certainty. Arrow III “modifications” recently targeted to begin in fiscal year 2005 have been returned to a FY04 target. Current “modifications” will not replace a more thorough “overhaul” still planned. NJ-ARP repeated its desire to see Arrow cars fitted to run with automatic tap changers, offering use throughout NJT’s electrified rail network regardless of electric current provided.

The Arrow “rehabilitations” will be funded in part by FY03 funds, as well; FY03 began July 1, 2002 and ran through June 30. Warrington said about $25 million has been set aside ($18 million for parts, $6 million for labor) for a series of in-house modifications at the Meadows Maintenance Complex (MMC) where an assembly line, of sorts, has been established for this purpose.

Punctilating the acceleration was the failure of three inverters in three months. Inverters take the d.c. current, after it has been rectified from the 25 kv, 60 hertz (M&I and NJCL) or 11kv, 25 hertz (NEC) a.c. catenary, and transform it (inverts it from d.c.) into three-phase alternating current for the traction motors. ABB changed the traction motors from d.c. to a.c. in the last fleet overhaul in the early 1990s. All inverters will be changed and Warrington claimed that this aspect is four years overdue. He stressed –mentioning it twice – that “we are not going to be concentrating on cosmetics.”

All EMU M&E Remains Elusive

Revisiting a related question, NJ-ARP asked whether the Morris & Essex Lines could be converted back to all-EMU operation. At present, three different types of equipment are used with three distinct performance envelopes: Arrow III EMUs and diesel-hauled Comets from Hoboken, overlaid with ALP 44 and ALP 46 electric locomotive-hauled Comets on NJT MidTown Direct services. Warrington acknowledged the scenario, but referred the matter to NJT’s Bill Duggan for future discussion.

More pressing to Warrington is the East Orange M&E viaducts and that work needs to be performed on them in 2004. NJ-ARP allowed that the viaducts have been “leaking” for some time (poor drainage); Warrington replied, “It’s gone way beyond that,” and significant structural repair can wait no longer. Track outages, for varying periods of time, may become a given.

(Continued on Page 8)
Southern New Jersey Light Rail Transit System

Southern New Jersey Light Rail will provide convenient light rail service between Trenton and Camden along the Delaware River.

- 34-mile corridor includes 20 station stops and more than 3,000 new parking spaces.
- Runs roughly parallel to historic waterfront communities along the Delaware River.
- Provides connection to NJ TRANSIT, AMTRAK, PATCO trains for easy access to midtown Manhattan, Atlantic City, Philadelphia, Newark Liberty International Airport and more.
- Comfortable, state-of-the-art, air-conditioned light rail cars seat 90 passengers with standing room for 100 more, and plenty of room for luggage, bikes, and strollers.
- The light rail vehicle is fully compliant with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act and offers convenient level boarding from low-level platforms.
- Free parking at all stations with the exception of Trenton.
- Customers purchase tickets from Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) located at each station, and validate their one-way

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‘Through-Running’ (Continued from Page 7)

As for non-electric passenger equipment, Comet V deliveries have resumed after being interrupted, following resolution of numerous problems. The one discussed most was the the bankruptcy of one firm that supplied the Buckeye truck, which had led to suggestions of possible Comet I truck cannibalization — a sore point with NJ-ARP Rockland Liaison Orrin Getz, present at the meeting, who has fought for adequate equipment — including retention of the Comet I until new gear arrives on the Pascack Valley Line.

The first of the new 4,000 horsepower diesels is due on the property in February or March. Warrington insisted they will not be released into regular service until they have been run on their own tracks “24/7” and put — an approach similar to NJT’s efforts vis a vis Southern New Jersey Light Rail Transit (SNJLRT).

The ALP46 electric locomotives are still having problems with the frequency converters, unable, at times, to restart after shutting down power in phase gaps. These occur on Midtown Direct services in the Meadowlands and on the M&E at phase gaps. Warrington claimed the problem is in the software.

While the overhead catenary is 60 hertz commercial frequency single phase a.c., the power comes directly from one of three phase taps on the utility generator after the voltage is stepped down. Each separate phase is then fed to a separate section of the M&E with each section about 10 miles in length. This is done to maintain electrical “balance” on the generator. The location where the individual phases meet is the “phase gap.” This is needed because each phase is electrically 120 degrees “out of phase.” The NEC doesn’t have this problem, since its 25 hertz is produced by rotary and solid state converters and, since the power feed does not come from a phase tap on a generator, no out-of-phase input is seen by the train traction motors.

ALP44 electric locomotives have experienced troubles of their own, Warrington noted, and these issues have been around for years. The traction motors and tap changers (25kv, 60 hertz to 11kv, 25 hertz) are “not up to standard.” NJT has hired someone to address the problem, NJ-ARP was informed.
NJT’s Maintenance Complex Holds ‘Complex’ re; EMUs

Another NEWSLETTER REPORT, another jump to focus on a current (or recurrent) problem in New Jersey’s transit – or New Jersey Transit. But underlying many of these problems is the very facility designed to head them off – New Jersey Transit’s Meadowlands Maintenance Complex (MMC). In NJ-ARP’s view, the MMC is too often a problem unto itself, and riders suffer as a result.

Heralded as state of the art when it was unveiled, the MMC seems repeatedly incapable of handling NJT’s electric multiple-unit (EMU) fleet of Arrow III cars. Instead of addressing this shortcoming, NJT for more than a decade has chosen to look the other way – and ignore its need for more EMUs. In repeated discussions w/ NJ-ARP, NJT serves up “problems” while postponing action. NJT’s recent decision to recondition the Arrow III fleet is a welcome development (see page 7), but rehabilitation is only one issue – maintenance standards need to back up any reconditioning.

July’s NJT service disasters involving EMUs, causing repeated and extensive delays, largely were explained away by bad luck and factors beyond anyone’s control. Cutomers were courted with $ rebate program, and (to be fair) NJT scored public relations points. Almost forgotten, however, was a wheel/axle failure, which derailed two cars of an Arrow III electric multiple-unit (EMU) train between Newark and New York. Fortunately the cars did NOT roll down the embankment, and no fatalities resulted. A hotbox on another NEC Arrow III near Trenton later the same week caused the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to immediately ground the entire NJT Arrow III fleet, as officials sought to determine the cause of this dangerous condition.

The root cause of these problems? Apparently, incorrect car inspection and repairs at the MMC. NJT has made clear for many years its disdain for EMUs, because the FRA requires locomotive inspections of the Arrow III fleet (in essence, it demands NJT treat EMUs as locomotives). NJT says such inspection frequency drives up operational costs. But the Long Island Rail Road, Metro-North Railroad, and SEPTA collectively have nearly 2,000 EMU cars, commit to inspection procedures, run their respective electric zones almost exclusively with EMUs, and chose to replensih and replace their EMU fleets in kind.

It’s always possible that NJT has “unique” problems other nearby regional agencies don’t encounter. NJ-ARP doubts such is so, but on the off-chance it could be valid, NJ-ARP has a solution – if NJT can swallow its pride and face the music.

NJT, or perhaps the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), should hire Metro-North as a consultant for a complete review of MMC maintenance procedures on the Arrow III fleet, from pantographs to trucks. Metro-North is widely regarded as the best run rail system in the region, and one of the best in the nation. Its fleet is dominated by EMU trains with trucks similar to the Arrow III’s. Some of the EMU fleet are dual-voltage, operating on both third rail and AC catenary (these are used on the New Haven Line, where Metro-North’s trains out of Grand Central Terminal operate to and from the Northeast Corridor at New Rochelle). Metro-North has the best measures of car failure in the region.

Indeed, most of MTA’s EMU equipment – including that of the Long Island Rail Road and SEPTA’s EMUs are 30-35 years old. Somehow, NJT’s brethren operate EMU equipment without NJT’s problems.

NJ-ARP believes NJDOT needs to act on this matter to ensure visibility and a critical independent eye, which would make corrective action by NJT more likely. This review should, of course, be made known to the public.

-- Joseph Versaggi and Ralph Braskett

BUS RAPID TRANSIT – STELLAR OXYMORON

Sit stewing in the loop gridlock that is morning traffic in and around the Lincoln Tunnel – come see “Bus Rapid Transit” at its best! Or is it? BRT advocates say BRT somehow transcends Express Bus Lanes (while using them!) and is a “brand new solution” (which is neither “new” nor a “solution”). It is cheap – like the XBL is. See where we’ve arrived. “Just like light rail, but cheaper,” right? Um, no.

In short, BRT is the latest word game employed by those who can’t, who won’t accept passenger rail solutions as part of New Jersey’s transport mix. Bus Rapid Transit is the latest “cheap but better” chimera offered to the gullible.

And we CAN say that, because at NJ-ARP, we support real transit solutions – including bus— as well as rail, light rail, ferry and even bicycle. We’re not anti-bus (though you can expect to hear that dismissive charge, over and over). But we know “what’s in a word,” and we’ll say so.

Join NJ-ARP. You’ll join a group willing to employ many transit tools, and not just “one-size-fits-all-cheaply” rhetoric offering yesterday’s inadequate solutions for tomorrow’s looming problems.

[ ] Single $20.00 [ ] Family $30.00 [ ] Sustaining $50.00 [ ] Patron $100.00 [ ] Travel Agency $150.00 [ ] Corporate $500.00 [ ] Student/Senior (Up to 3 People)

☐ Enclosed is $_____ for ____ membership(s) in NJ-ARP.

Name __________________________________________
Address _________________________________________
City/State __________ Zip __________
Phone __________ (day) __________ (eve) __________ E-mail ____________________________

(news.0310.arp)
Annual Meeting Precedes SNJLRT’s Operating Debut

NJ-ARP’s 2003 Annual Meeting, set for Saturday, November 15, at the 36th Street Yards in Camden, N.J., initially was timed so as not to take place before the debut of Southern New Jersey Light Rail Transit. But SNJLRT’s operations will still be sometime after the November 15 date — meaning NJ-ARP members can view SNJLRT equipment in its home shop, up close and “personal,” before revenue operations begin.

The meeting begins at 11:00 a.m. (registration begins at 10:30 a.m., with pre-meeting coffee available). Scheduled speakers include: Joyce Gallagher, New Jersey Transit’s Assistant General Manager for SNJLRT; Kathleen Cannon, reporter with the Burlington County Times; and Anthony C. Macrie, president and general manager of Cape May Seashore Lines, who will update NJ-ARP members on CMSL’s trackwork and rail freight plans.

A buffet lunch will be served, and (as always) elections for NJ-ARP’s eight-person Board of Directors will be held. Also on tap: honoring the 2003 NJ-ARP Arthur L. Reuben Advocate for Rail Transit (ART) Award.

Registration is $25 prior to November 12; $40 at the door. Please return registration forms only to NJ-ARP, c/o Bowen, 1219 Garden St., Hoboken, N.J. 07030. Ballots, to be mailed separately, should be sent to NJ-ARP, c/o Exact., P.O. Box 58, Montvale, N.J. 07645-0058. Questions or concerns about getting there? We’ll try to help; call 201-798-6137, extension 2; leave your name and phone number so we can return your call.

NJ-ARP Board Meeting Schedule

November 15: Annual Meeting (See story above)  Dec. 10: George’s Station Restaurant, Bound Brook, 6:30 p.m.
January 10: Café Beethoven, Chatham, 9:00 a.m.  February 11: Rutgers Alumni Club, New Brunswick, 6:30 p.m

Individuals wishing to attend meetings should contact NJ-ARP at (201) 798-6137 at least three (3) days prior to the meeting, leaving your name and telephone number.

New Jersey Association of Railroad Passengers
NEWSLETTER REPORT
October 22, 2003  Page 10