

Anchorage's Public Transportation

January 2001

Buses return to Hillside

By George Wuerch

One of my first official People Mover events as mayor was the Oct. 6 dedication of the Benny Benson Plaza. This plaza/bus stop, at the corner of Benson Boulevard and Spennard Road, was the result of efforts by many volunteers from the Spennard Community Center, the Department of Transportation and People Mover's Green Team. They helped convert a dusty and unattractive corner in Spennard into a comfortable, landscaped plaza for the community. The new Benny Benson Plaza is one of a number of improvements we have planned for our community.

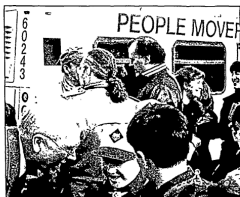
There was a period of time during the recent budget process where we had to look at the possibility of cutting back public transportation, as we did for all municipal services with the exception of public safety. But after voters rejected the 10-mil property tax cap in November, we were able to restore funding for the majority of services the public wants — including bus service. I'm pleased that public transportation services are not reduced

in the 2001 budget. In fact, Hillside bus service will resume January 2nd, providing buses to Service High School and Hilltop Ski Area — just in time for the 2001 Special Olympics World Winter Games. An estimated 10,000 people will be in Anchorage for this event and the Hilltop Ski Area will be one of the venues.

As Anchorage has grown over the years, not all neighborhoods and business areas are provided access to our bus system. As a consequence some of the people who might be most likely to use public transportation, don't have access to it. That's why I'm looking forward to the planned route restructuring this coming year. We will retain the services of a transportation consultant to look at our bus system and recommend a basic "footprint" — in order to route buses to the right places and provide the best access for our customers. We want people to be able to easily get to a bus stop and be taken to their destination quickly, so that more residents will use the People Mover.

In addition to making sure we identify the best and most convenient routes for the most people, the municipality will be conducting a public information campaign to remind residents of the convenience and benefits of riding the bus. Our public transportation system makes Anchorage a better place to live. The People Mover bus system keeps

our senior citizens, youth, and those with disabilities mobile and independent; it provides access to jobs and shopping; it conserves energy and improves air quality, and most important, People Mover interconnects our community into one large family.



Mayor Wuerch thanks Cub Scout Pack 117 for raising the Alaska Flag at the Benny Benson Plaza/Bus Stop

Message from the Director



What a year! We celebrated the millennium at the Emergency Operations Center, along with most other municipal departments, to make sure Anchorage safely started the year 2000. The only Y2K problem we experienced at People Mover involved a glitch with passenger counts by our fareboxes. This was corrected within two days and we were able to re-create much of the data.

January 2000 was also the final month of our free bus service, sponsored by the federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality program. A 35% increase in People Mover ridership prompted us to offer our February 2000 monthly passes at a 50% discount. I'm pleased that the free program was so successful that we will again have free buses in January and February 2001.

After an April election when our public transportation bond failed, I was surprised and pleased by the telephone calls that came in—people who were frustrated that the word wasn't communicated to the public about what these bonds brought to Anchorage—a \$5 return for every \$1 we invest. The people who called were to become some of our biggest transit advocates, creating the Transit Works advocacy group.

We prepared two operating budgets in 2001—both having significant cuts in People Mover and AnchorRIDES services. While the process of setting service levels and discussing possible loss of Sunday service, Eagle River service, late evening service, and more is never fun, it did get people talking about the value of public transportation to the citizens of Anchorage. Thanks to everyone who spoke out about their public transportation needs, to the Anchorage Assembly, and to Mayor George Wuerch for supporting public transportation.

Next year, we plan to look at our entire service for needed changes and implement a transportation skills assessment and travel training program, while focusing on our public image. See you on the bus!
—Bob Kniefel, Director

Mail

Public Transportation Department
3650A East Tudor Road
Anchorage, AK 99507-1252

Email

wvtd@ci.anchorage.ak.us

Anchorage Municipal Assembly to review 5-year Plan

The Anchorage Municipal Assembly will review the 2000-2004 Public Transportation Development Plan (PTDP) at a work session on Tuesday, January 9, 2001.

That evening, the Assembly will also hear testimony from the public regarding the plan and its recommendations. This is your chance to let policy makers know how important public transportation services (People Mover, Share-a-Ride, and AnchorRIDES) are to you.

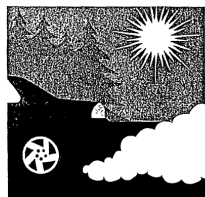
Federal Funds Offer 2001 Free Bus Service

Each winter, Anchorage faces air quality problems due to carbon monoxide (CO) from automobile emissions. A personal vehicle produces more than 80% of these CO emissions. The Citizens Air Quality Advisory Committee and the Anchorage Congestion Management Program recommend a multi-faceted program to address improvements to our air quality and congestion. Along with encouraging engine plug-ins, improved vehicle testing, and a public awareness campaign, the Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Study Policy Committee is using Federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funding to provide free People Mover bus service. All People Mover buses will be free during January and February 2001. This is the second year of a 3-year special demonstration project with funds replacing the fares normally collected during the free months.

The PTDP identifies priorities for how improved services and new routes are introduced into People Mover's system. It describes our existing programs and our plans for increased participation in these programs, outlines the funding needed to pay for drivers and for fuel, and for buses and other capital improvements. The PTDP discusses the need to focus on our image and recognizes that public transportation benefits air quality, congestion management, economic development, public mobility, welfare reform, energy conservation and extends the life of our roadway system.

The Anchorage Municipal Assembly and Public Transportation staff will discuss the 5-year plan at a work session on Tuesday, January 9, 2001 at 1:00 p.m. in the Mayors Conference Room at City Hall. The public is invited to testify at public hearings on Tuesday, January 9, 2001 at approximately 7:00 p.m. in the Assembly Chambers at Louiss Library. For transportation to the meeting, Routes 2, 36, 60 and 75 serve the Louiss Library.

For more information on the 2000-2004 Public Transportation Development Plan, call 343-8383, or visit our website at www.peoplemover.org.



Care about air!

Because each bus replaces about 40 cars on the road, increased bus ridership results in reduced congestion, and improved air quality for all in Anchorage.

Last year, free rides were provided during November, December, and January. Ridership increased 35% during these months, prompting the Public Transportation Department to offer February 2001 bus passes at half price.

Just the Facts



Annual System Performance

2000 People Mover

Annual Ridership.....	3,122,000
Fleet Miles.....	1,971,000
Timetable Revenue Hours.....	104,507
Passenger per Timetable Rev. Hour.....	29.9
Park & Ride Lots.....	5
Accessible Ramp Use.....	3,200



2000 Share-A-Ride

Registered Applicants.....	4,987
Active Car Pools.....	483
Active Car Pool Participants.....	1,012
Active Van Pools.....	18
Active Van Pool Participants.....	272
Annual Vehicle Miles Saved.....	6,830,694
Annual Gallons of Gasoline Saved.....	379,483



2000 AnchorRIDES

Trips Requested.....	204,779
Trips Cancelled.....	31,095
Trips No-Showed.....	4,625
Trips Denied.....	4,267
Total Eligible Trips Provided.....	164,792
ADA Eligible Trips Provided.....	97,510
Senior Eligible Trips Provided.....	67,282

People Mover Route Restructure

As Anchorage changes and develops, public transportation services have to change and develop as well to continue to meet the needs of our residents and visitors. During the past 12 years, new subdivisions, schools, and stores have been built both on and off bus routes.

One of the projects identified in the 2000-2004 Public Transportation Development Plan (PTDP) is to conduct a comprehensive route structure analysis to determine the most efficient and effective route structure based on current/future trip patterns, land use plans, and resources. The Municipality is soliciting proposals from qualified transportation consultants to provide professional transit service planning and scheduling assistance as directed by Municipal Public Transportation Department staff. Tasks for this consultant will include implementing an effective public involvement program, reviewing existing People Mover conditions and data, evaluating the existing People Mover system, and developing/analyzing bus route alternatives.

The "outcome" of this project includes a map with details outlining the "footprint" of a basic route structure and an "optimal route" system, detailing the most logical steps for increases/decreases to accommodate various budget scenarios for People Mover. The consultant will be asked to identify opportunities for hybrid fixed route and paratransit service applications in the transit system area.

Although Anchorage continues to face operating budget constraints, the resultant work product is not to be considered as a "Service Reduction Analysis" but rather a recommendation for route and schedule changes to increase ridership and efficiency.

We are planning to have a consultant hired and ready to start this project by March 2001.



Route 66/68— Hillside People Mover Service

People Mover bus service will return to the Hillside area on Tuesday, January 2, 2001! This service was eliminated in August 1999 due to a reduction in the operating budget. There were many homeowners, students, and employees who were left stranded when Routes 90, 91 and 92 were cut. Fortunately, these folks didn't sit back and take it! They called their assembly members, the Mayor's office, and they wrote letters to the editor. These efforts showed the community that public transportation is a basic community service—that having a job didn't mean anything if you couldn't get there...that providing additional programs to help students learn wasn't as well attended if youth couldn't get home...that tourists couldn't see as much of our community and enjoy our zoo if they couldn't get there. The Anchorage Municipal Assembly and Mayor George Wuerch support the Hillside bus service in 2001.

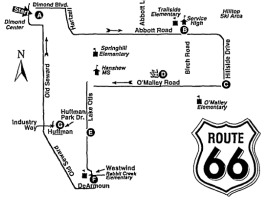
People Mover Route 66 will operate on Abbott Road, Hillside Drive, O'Malley Road, Lake Ous, and through the Kempton Hills subdivision to DeArmour and the Old Seward Highway. The route will serve the Huffman Business Park. Route 68 will operate the opposite direction (counter clockwise). The map and schedules of the new routes are shown below.

Route 66 - Weekday - CLOCKWISE										
Dimond Center	Service Center	O'Malley Hillside	Alaska Zoo	Lk Ous	DeArmour Hillside	Huffman Park	Huffman Center	Dimond Center	Service Center	O'Malley Hillside
5:02	6:12	7:18	8:21	9:25	10:29	11:34	12:38	1:42	2:46	3:50
7:02	7:12	7:18	7:21	7:25	7:29	7:36	7:46	7:50	8:00	8:06
10:40	10:50	10:58	10:59	11:03	11:07	11:14	11:24	2:40	2:50	2:56
4:20	4:30	4:36	4:39	4:43	4:47	4:54	5:04	5:50	6:00	6:06
8:50	10:00	10:05	10:09	10:13	10:17	10:24	10:34	8:27	8:34	8:42

Route 68 - Weekday - COUNTERCLOCKWISE										
Dimond Center	Huffman Center	DeArmour Hillside	Lk Ous	Alaska Zoo	O'Malley Hillside	Service Center	Dimond Center	Huffman Center	DeArmour Hillside	Lk Ous
6:27	6:34	6:42	6:47	6:53	6:57	7:02	7:14	8:00	8:07	8:15
9:45	9:52	10:00	10:05	10:11	10:15	10:20	10:32	1:43	1:50	1:58
3:30	3:37	3:45	3:50	3:56	4:00	4:05	4:17	5:15	5:22	5:30
5:15	5:22	5:30	5:35	5:41	5:45	5:50	6:02	10:50	11:00	11:06

Route 66 - Saturday - CLOCKWISE										
Dimond Center	Service Center	O'Malley Hillside	Alaska Zoo	Lk Ous	DeArmour Hillside	Huffman Park	Huffman Center	Dimond Center	Service Center	O'Malley Hillside
7:39	7:49	7:55	7:58	8:02	8:06	8:13	8:23	10:25	11:00	11:06
9:50	10:00	10:06	10:09	10:13	10:17	10:24	10:34	7:45	7:55	8:01
12:40	12:50	12:56	12:59	1:03	1:07	1:14	1:24	6:10	6:20	6:26

Route 66 - Sunday - CLOCKWISE										
Dimond Center	Service Center	O'Malley Hillside	Alaska Zoo	Lk Ous	DeArmour Hillside	Huffman Park	Huffman Center	Dimond Center	Service Center	O'Malley Hillside
9:16	9:26	9:32	9:35	9:39	9:43	9:50	10:00	12:40	12:50	12:56
6:10	6:20	6:26	6:29	6:33	6:37	6:44	6:54	9:16	9:26	9:32



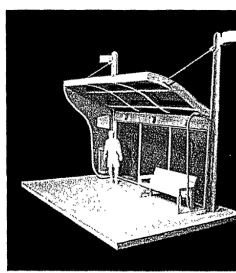
New Shelters in 2001!

People Mover's "Green Team" announces plans to construct at least two new bus stop shelters during the summer of 2001. The new structure was designed by Land Design North, a local landscape architectural firm. The design was chosen as part of a 1999 shelter proposal request where four local architectural and engineering firms submitted potential designs for review.

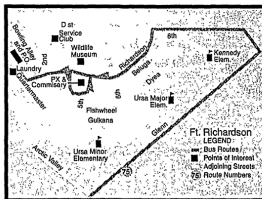
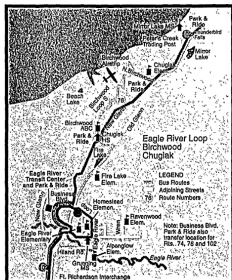
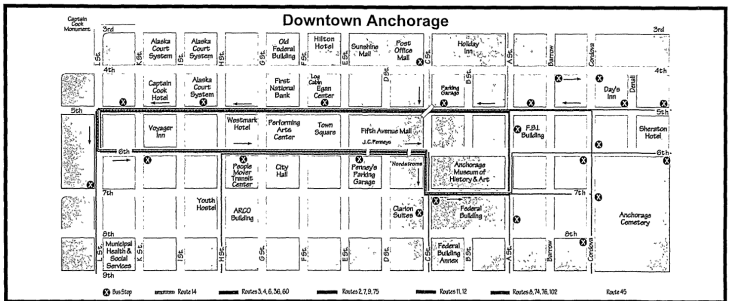
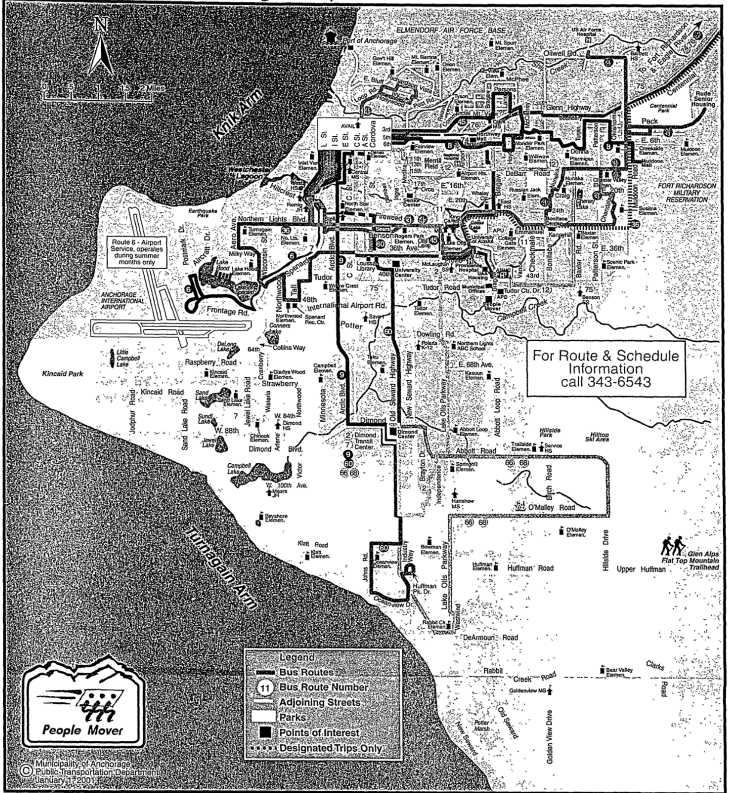
The new shelter was designed to be aesthetically pleasing and serve as a recognizable feature, but be constructed in a cost effective way. Standard light posts support the corrugated metal roof and provide protection for most of the boarding pad at the bus stop. Lighting and optional side and back panels will add to the safety and passenger comfort.

"The design of a transit shelter that can be used throughout Anchorage has been a strong collaborative effort between the Municipality of Anchorage Green Team and Land Design North. The shelters will provide refuge from the weather in our northern climate and encourage people to use our public transportation system. The shelters also offer the opportunity to add a splash of color and light to our streets and neighborhoods. Just as we might furnish our homes with things that are durable, comfortable and attractive the shelters will act as an element in furnishing our streets." Terry Schoenthal, ASLA, LDN

The new shelters will be featured at People Mover stops on A Street, north of Northern Lights Boulevard (beside Tesoro); at Northern Lights Boulevard, west of Minnesota Drive (in front of the new post office opposite Carr's Aurora Village); and on Benson Boulevard east of Denali Street (in front of the Peking Palace).



Anchorage People Mover Bus Routes



343-6543

www.peplemover.org

Who Needs Public Transportation in Anchorage?



"I take the bus to work, medical appointments and shopping."
Ernestine Thompson



"We have been serving the community for the past thirty-two years. If bus service is cut it would cause many problems for our business."
Della Fisher, Hillcrest Children's Center



"I use People Mover six days a week. It's my only source of transportation."
Barbara Shagin



"I ride from Eagle River to my job in Anchorage. It's safer than driving, especially in the snow."
Larry Taylor



"I use public transportation to go to Costco, Northway Mall, my dentist, the library, Barnes & Noble..."
Linda Hoover



"I live in east Anchorage and work at the Dimond Wal-mart. I take the bus to work during the week and on the weekends I take the bus shopping and to church."
Angela Meneses

Transit Works for Anchorage is a group of Anchorage residents, formed after the failure of a Public Transportation bond issue on the Spring 2000 ballot. The group was instrumental in spreading the word about the need for improved and increased public transportation within our community. This group has been visiting and surveying area businesses to determine how widespread public transportation use is among their employees. Information returned to Transit Works for Anchorage by employees of Anchorage 5th Avenue Mall shows that 14% of those employees use the bus for their trips to and from work, and 30% of Carr's/Safeway employees use the bus on a regular basis.

These employees recognize the value and the cost of commuting. They recognize the savings they achieve by using a \$30 monthly bus pass — and the convenience of riding the bus. These employees care about our air and our community. Most important of all, these employees are "Just Like YOU!"

Think about it. If you aren't riding the bus now, call 343-8383 for personalized People Mover information.

**Your neighbors... your friends...
your family... People Just Like You!**

Frequently Asked Questions

What happened to Hillside bus service?

The Hillside area routes had few riders and were cancelled in August 1999. We are pleased to again offer service to the Hillside area with more frequent service to more of the area.

Why are you providing free bus service?

We are committed to improving the air quality in Anchorage by reducing congestion and getting more cars off the road. To do this, we need more people on the bus. Funding is coming from a federal grant dedicated to improvements in air quality and reductions in congestion.

Where can I learn how to ride the bus?

We are starting a travel training program to teach people how to ride the bus. Call 343-8445 for more information.

How many bus stops are plowed every winter?

More than 600 bus stops are plowed each winter through three city programs: a three year demonstration program using federal funds, a private snowplow contractor, and Parks & Beautification plowing. We also can't forget to recognize our Adopt-a-Stop volunteers who clean bus stops near their home or work. For more information about the Adopt-a-Stop program call 343-8230.

Why doesn't my bus stop have a shelter or bench?

Shelters are placed based on the number of people boarding at that bus stop. Shelters are also located at bus stops that serve senior citizens, people with disabilities, and medical facilities. To date, our "Green Team" has placed 75 benches throughout the Anchorage area. Construction will continue until all bus stops are upgraded to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act.

How can employers help their employees with transportation?

Many businesses recognize the value of providing an employee transportation benefit and pay for some, or all, employee transportation costs.

The bus doesn't stop close enough to my home. What are my other options?

The Anchorage Share-A-Ride's carpool and vanpool program matches people traveling along the same route and near the same times. Call 343-8497 for more information.

My child stays after school for sports.

What bus service is available for after school activities?

All bus routes have afternoon service. Student riders constitute more than 2,200 of People Mover's 11,000 riders on a daily basis. Of the 88 schools within the Anchorage School District, 65 are within 1/4 mile of a bus route.



Driver of the Year

Scottie Bartee

Employee of the Year

Dale Mayfield
(Customer Service)



AnchorRIDES

During 2001, our AnchorRIDES staff will focus on implementing two major projects—a new contract for our AnchorRIDES service provider, and our Transportation Skills Assessment and Travel Training program.

As coordinated transportation in Anchorage evolved, we found that our current contract for AnchorRIDES service was difficult to administer. Many funding sources contribute to transportation of senior citizens and of people with disabilities within the Municipality of Anchorage. The Alaska Commission on Aging, Medicaid, the Anchorage School District, the Municipality of Anchorage, and passenger fares and donations all provide funding which provides passenger trips. We also determined that we needed our AnchorRIDES service provider to ensure better on-time performance, to increase its public outreach, and to expand coordinated transportation. We are currently negotiating with a company for this contract. As always, change is difficult; however, the result will be a better transportation system for AnchorRIDES eligible residents.

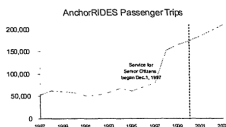
TRAVEL TRAINING

Our Transportation Skills Assessment and Travel Training program is necessary to link our AnchorRIDES and People Mover systems. The program is based on understanding a person's functional and cognitive abilities and their ability to use People Mover service for some or all of their trips.

Not only does AnchorRIDES provide much-needed transportation for many people who are unable to use People Mover buses, but it is also mandated by The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The ADA requires us to provide a paratransit service to individuals with disabilities who are prevented from riding People Mover service due to impairment-related conditions.

The Travel Training portion provides individualized skill building to teach people how to use People Mover. The level of training may be for one hour to instruct commuters on how to read a bus schedule to six weeks to teach a person with a developmental disability how to ride the bus. By providing individualized training, people become more independent and their mobility greatly increases.

In addition to these projects, we're looking at technology to help our AnchorRIDES service be more efficient through the use of in-vehicle computers to improve on-time performance, reduce voice radio traffic, and system reporting.



Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Study

A BIG transportation picture, in BITE size pieces. The important first step in creating a new BIG transportation picture is the adoption of Anchorage 2020, Anchorage's 20-year comprehensive plan. As many of you are aware, the Assembly will soon adopt this new Plan. A detailed look at overall transportation issues like road alternatives, transit development, pedestrian factors, air quality, and others in relation to land uses will be in full swing starting next year. Stay tuned, you'll soon see and hear more about this.

In the meantime, a more immediate BITE size piece is required. The city has to update its overall 20-year transportation plan by March of 2001 to maintain its eligibility of federal funding for our transportation improvements. Due to the timing of the Anchorage 2020 adoption, the ability to completely redo Anchorage's transportation plan in three months is not possible. So between now and March, a "minor" review of the 1997 Long-Range Transportation Plan will be completed. This review will focus on particular parts of the 1997 plan that are in need of review or are particularly weak. These parts include incorporation of the new 5-year Public Transportation Development Plan, the Ship Creek Multi-Modal Transportation Plan, a revised section on Freight and a review of our financial future for transportation improvements. This review will be an update, since a brand new look at our entire transportation system will start by March 2001.

If you are interested in what's going on over the next three months or over the next 2-3 years, call the Municipal Planning Department's Transportation Planning Division at 343-4262 or send an e-mail to: wilber@c1.anchorage.ak.us



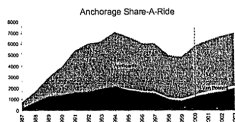
Share-A-Ride

The Anchorage Share-A-Ride program was started as a carpool matching system during the energy crisis of 1976. Its initial emphasis was on providing a free "matching" service for residents of Anchorage in order to decrease the number of commuter trips made alone. Over the years the emphasis on carpooling has continued but other transportation options have also been promoted.

an established but flexible route to provide transportation between their home and work locations.

The Share-A-Ride program has grown over the years from less than 200 participants to almost 5,000. At the end of 2000, more than 1,500 residents are commuting in carpools and vanpools listed with the Anchorage Share-A-Ride program. These "poolers" conserve more than 500,000 gallons of fuel each year.

In 1995, a vanpooling element was added as a way for People Mover to provide a broad variety of alternatives to driving alone and the targeted area was increased to include Girdwood and the Mat-Su Valley. The vanpool program consists of 13- and 14-passenger vehicles purchased by the Municipality of Anchorage and allows commuters who are unable to use People Mover to have



2000 Highlights

People Mover wants 4 million riders on the bus by the year 2004. We are looking to get more people on the bus through several fun programs.

ClassPass

More than 115 teachers have purchased an annual ClassPass. This program allowed 17,680 students to ride People Mover buses free for class field trips this year. The pass is only \$40 and is good for unlimited trips for an entire class throughout the school year.



U-Pass

More than 700 trips daily are made on People Mover buses by UAA employees and students. The University of Alaska Anchorage and People Mover have teamed up to make commuting to UAA even easier! Employees and currently enrolled students get a validation sticker put on their identification cards and can ride all buses FREE!

Seniors/People with Disabilities

About 1,700 senior citizens and people with disabilities use People Mover buses daily. Buses can "kneel" so the

first step is closer to the ground. Ramps can be lowered so people with wheelchairs, walkers, or crutches can easily board the bus. An automated voice announcement system lets people know when the bus is approaching a bus stop. Have you been on a People Mover bus in the past couple years? If not, hop on during the free months of January and February 2001 to see more of the fun and easy features of our buses!

ESP Employers

More than 120 employees at twelve local businesses receive a public transportation benefit from their

employers. Revisions in the federal tax laws have made it even more economical to pay for all or part of your employees bus pass or van pool fare. Call 343-8491 for more information.

ETC

Employer Transportation Coordinators are the backbone of our employer outreach efforts. About 115 representatives at local businesses assist us in our marketing efforts by coordinating surveys, providing carpool parking spaces, and by educating their employees on the benefits of public transportation.



Find out more about Anchorage's Public Transportation System



www.peoplemover.org

Email us at: wwtd@ci.anchorage.ak.us



2000-2001 edition of the ATU Yellow Pages (Page 29 of the "Discover Alaska" section) People Mover Bus Rideline 343-6543 for schedule information 24 hours everyday.



Mail us at: 3650A East Tudor Road, Anchorage, AK 99507-1252



Stop by the Transit Center at 6th Avenue and G Street
See a map and schedule at a bus stop.

We want to see YOU on the bus!



Billie Lewis



Frank Appel



Daryl Nelson



Lara Newby

Not pictured
Carol Jackson



Judy Whittaker



George Nagel



Dawnia Clements



Steve Kalnes-Chair

Public Transit Advisory Board 2001 Meeting Schedule

The Public Transit Advisory Board meets monthly and meetings are open to the public. Please try to attend one or all of the meetings planned for 2001:

January 24	City Hall, Room 160
February 28	City Hall, Room 160
March 28	11901 Business Blvd, Suite 203 Eagle River
April 25	City Hall, Room 830
May 23	City Hall, Room 160
June 27	Girdwood
August 22	City Hall, Room 160
September 26	City Hall, Room 160
October 24	City Hall, Room 160
December 5	City Hall, Room 160

All meetings start at 5:30 p.m. and are scheduled to end at 7:00 p.m. Please call 343-8213 to confirm meeting dates and times.

The Public Transit Advisory Board

Public oversight of Anchorage's public transportation system is provided by an advisory board of nine members. The board is appointed by the Mayor and is intended to contribute to the long-range planning of a balanced public transportation system in the Municipality. Its duties include:

- Support a balanced publicly owned and operated transit system
- Make recommendations to the Anchorage Assembly and the Mayor on municipal policy with respect to: routes, fares, schedules, and service levels for public transportation services; integrating public and private transit systems; review of capital and operating budgets; the location and development of transit facilities, transit

corridors and those aspects of transit that contribute to orderly and economic development; and other matters relating to public transportation policy

- Assist the Assembly and Mayor in supporting and promoting the use of public transportation in the Municipality.