

# Bus devices get green light

**2 ROUTES:** Assembly OKs triggering signals to speed up service.

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Anchorage's People Mover bus system has won approval for a plan to use electronic devices on two of its 14 routes that will allow buses to get through traffic lights faster.

The project was approved unanimously by the Anchorage Assembly on Tuesday night.

The routes are No. 7 along Spenard Road and No. 9 along Arctic Boulevard.

The electronic devices will be turned on next week, said

Paula Kangis, People Mover marketing director.

They will allow a bus to get an early green light, or extend a green light, and should speed up bus service. Twenty traffic lights among the 271 lights on the two routes will be programmed to respond to the bus signals.

Buses could clear intersections about 45 seconds faster, People Mover director Jody Karcz said last month.

That means drivers in other vehicles on the cross streets would wait that much longer.

The bus priority system will be the same as the one used by the Anchorage Fire Department, but emergency vehicles get a higher priority than bus-

es if both arrive at a light at the same time.

People Mover officials say the goal is to reduce travel time and increase ridership. The net result: less traffic congestion as more people choose buses, People Mover says.

The city is treating it as a pilot project. The University of Alaska Anchorage's civil engineering department will collect information on how it's working and prepare a report to the Assembly. The report is due a year from now.

The Assembly authorization for the bus system to use the devices ends June 1, 2011, if the Assembly doesn't extend it.