

THE LONG SQUIGGLY LINE THAT'S KILLING OUR TRANSIT SYSTEM

and News of a Brazilian Cure by Robert Firth & the staff of Informing Design, Inc.

WE KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, OH WISE MEN OF PITTSBURGH . . .

Port Authority knows its business, they're keeping 74% of service intact.

That's appropriate to our population.

A long overdue belt-tightening!!

Stop your whining, transit riders, this is good for us!

BUT WAIT . . .
What if their math is all mixed up . . .

100% of service

rush hour in-between time rush hour evening

You see, the 26% that's going to be lopped off is almost entirely at rush hour (when the vast majority of riders need buses, of course).

74% of service that is left

rush hour in-between time rush hour evening

WHERE ARE ALL THE BODIES GOING TO FIT?

OH WAIT . . .
I get it . . . there IS a plan. We're all going to be allowed to come to work at 10, 11 or noon, when one of the remaining 74% of buses has enough room to stop to pick someone up.

HURRAH!

This IS good news for riders!

...mug of coffee that can now be served slowly...

But we don't think our bosses will be happy.

CAN'T ANYTHING BE DONE ABOUT THIS?

YES!

CURITIBA-WOMAN TO THE RESCUE!!!

CURITIBA-WOMAN????

Over 20 years ago little Curitiba, Brazil, figured something out: the long squiggly line kills transit systems!

Primeval bus route thinking:

Far away north, north hills (Franklin Park, say)

You start a bus line far away and have it slowly, slowly, stopping-ly make its way all the way to the center of town . . . slowly turning around in Downtown . . .

Then the squiggly line multiplies.

Aunt Martha's house

You see, Aunt Martha calls and insists that a route stops near her.

Ten Aunt Marthas later:

not to be confused with pile of spaghetti

the bus route system is a tangled mess.

AAARGGGHHH!
(translation from the Brazilian)

DO THE MATH
for needless waste and duplication!

Ten routes tangling along the same corridor for half their length.

Ten separate routes each taking a long, long time turning around in Downtown.

DITCH THE LONG SQUIGGLY LINES, FOR GOODNESS SAKE!

Are you ready? Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, even CLEVELAND have been figuring out how to ditch the long squiggly lines to improve service, even expand service for LESS COST!

Here's what you do instead: You break routes up.

- Short local circulators with lots of stops
- Fast, core route with very few stops
- No long turnaround in Downtown
- Downtown circulators with lots of stops

So a typical ride becomes . . .

- local circulator takes you to core route station
- a brief pause to transfer to an every 5-minute core route bus (at rush hour)
- fast ride through most of trip
- a brief pause to transfer to very frequent Downtown circulator
- Downtown circulator gets you close to anyplace

TRANSFERS??

YUK! YUK!

UGH! UGH!

WAIT, WAIT . . .
Transferring CAN be fun . . . and easy when the core route runs every 5 minutes at rush hour . . . and when there are nice fancy heated bus stations where you make the transfers.

Think about the Brazilian pleasures of . . .

Not having to walk 10 minutes or more to one of the rush hour routes remaining under the "74% plan."

Fast, simple Downtown circulator service that gets you within two blocks of any place.

No crazy mess of buses in Downtown, no overcrowded bus stops in Downtown.

BUT WAIT!!
There's more!

Pittsburgh can become famous throughout the world for having spent 100's of millions not just on each of three sports teams, but on the everyday comfort of everyday men & women.

YES,
we can finally get good use of the long, wide driveways passing under and through the Convention Center.

What a perfect bus station!! Here's where Downtown circulators would meet up with the core routes coming out of the East Busway.

LOOK HOW FUN DOWNTOWN WOULD BE, being able to hop on every few minutes bus running an east-west and north-south route.

Look ma, no buses on Fifth and Forbes!!!

ACROSS THE WHOLE CITY, bus service can suddenly become Brazilian simple and fun (with subway frequency):

Look: a Downtown-Oakland express! (A first, even though it's the busiest corridor!!)

OAKLAND HUB SERVICE could bloom into fast, frequent inter-neighborhood circulators:

WOW, SUBWAY-SIMPLE! WOULDN'T THIS BE FUN!?!?

WAIT! ISN'T ALL THIS JUST THEORETICAL?
(If not, why hasn't it been done already?)

Go to Washington and see how fabulous their new Georgetown to the Mall circulator buses are. Go to L.A. and see the success of their new Orange Bus Line in the San Fernando Valley. Go to Cleveland and check out the University Heights to University Circle circulator. (Or yes, go to Curitiba, Brazil, or even to Bogota, Colombia!!!)

BUT HOW CAN WE POSSIBLY AFFORD
Brazilian-style transit service that's pleasurable AND frequent?

JUST DO THE MATH!
Freed from the long squiggly line, you can:

- SAVE!** Eliminate needless duplication along corridors by instituting a few, high-frequency core-routes.
- SAVE!** Eliminate needless Downtown turnarounds.
- SAVE!** Institute local circulators that can be readily adjusted up or down by need.

The Result: More coverage, more frequent service, maybe even less cost than the "74% Plan"!

OH WISE MEN OF PITTSBURGH . . .
what if you are on the verge of a Transit Katrina, and not for want of money but for want of doing the math on routing waste and inefficiency?

Robert Firth, author of "Pittsburgh Figured Out," is president of Informing Design, the Downtown firm responsible for the design of the city's Wayfinder Sign System and the most recent Port Authority system map. The staff is Yelena Lamm, Frank Ruffing, Jennifer Gottschalk and Hilary Klein. Their most recent maps are on www.bigburg.com.