RAIL TRANSIT CONSTRUCTION AROUND THE WORLD

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Despite the present climate of fiscal retrenchment and budgetary constraints, cities throughout Europe continue to spend heavily on rail transit construction. The following survey, compiled by Paul J. Goldsack, reprinted here courtesy of *Mass Transit* magazine, describes current rail transit projects in different cities of Europe, Asia and South America.

**Austria**

Vienna's U-Bahn network, at present running two miles over Line U1, is due to be extended an additional two miles by the summer.

Meanwhile Line U4, a refurbished suburban rail line, is being extended in three stages. The line will eventually run more than 10.5 miles to Hutteldorf in the west.

A financing agreement for improvements to Vienna's street and subway transport networks has been concluded between the Austrian government and the city. It covers spending of the equivalent of US$ 1.9 billion over a 10-12 year period. Plans will include light rail improvements and construction of a 6.4 mile new subway line, upgrading of a Stadtbahn line to subway standards and a new 1.3 mile underground line connection.

**Belgium**

Work on three miles of new pre-metro lines in Antwerp is nearing completion after a slow start during the city's 1975-77 economic crisis. The first one-mile line opened in 1975 between Groenplaats and Central Station. Revenue operation on the second section, running 1.2 miles from Central Station to Belgielei, is due to start early next year. Line 2, from Turnhoutsebaan to Stenenbrug and then beneath Gemeenstestraat, is expected to be operational by 1981.

Extensions totaling 11.5 miles are under construction on the Brussels Metro, which at present has just over seven miles in operation. Cost of the new extensions is likely to top 15.1 billion Belgian francs (US$ 513.4 million) and work should be finished by 1982.

Due for delivery this year is a prototype of what may become Charleroi's standard light rail vehicle for the city's planned semimetro network. The car
is being built by Constructions Ferroviaires et Métalliques of Belgium and will feature chopper control equipment supplied by ACEC, also of Belgium. If the car operates successfully over Charleroi's first 1.1-mile pre-metro line, the city will place order for 55 vehicles. A total rail transit system of 32 miles in due for completion by 1995 at an estimated cost of 20 billion Belgian francs (US$ 680 million).

Brazil

A 13.6 mile light rail line has been proposed for Curitiba at a cost of US$ 150 m. The cost will include 100 articulated LRCs, each accommodating 500 passengers in two-car sets.

The first four stations along Sao Paulo's second (16 mile) line have begun passenger service. The new east–west line quarters the city by crossing line one (north–south) at an underground station in downtown Sao Paulo. The north–south line, which began service in late 1974, now carries more than 750,000 passengers daily and operates a 19 hour day, seven days a week. On a busy day it carries as many as a million passengers. Greater Sao Paulo, with more than 11 million inhabitants, is the largest metropolitan area in South America. The Metro plan calls for construction of five mass transit lines. Meanwhile, the Sao Paulo Metro has received a US$ 9 million credit from Eximbank to finance purchase of U.S. underground railway equipment.

The central government has agreed to finance work on a 31 mile regional express Metro linking Jacarei with Sao Jose dos Campos, Cacapava and Taubate in Sao Paulo state.

Bulgaria

Tunneling work has started on the first line of the Sofia Metro, between Bras and Tatuape on the east-west link. The 1.5-mile Se to Bras section has been in operation since last March. The second section is expected to be working by 1981. The Metro has ordered 282 new cars – 25 six-car sets from Cobrasma of Brazil and 22 from Mafersa, also of Brazil. Delivery is scheduled by 1983.

Czechoslovakia

The Prague Metro now operating over a four-mile section, has opened a further 6.2 miles in mid-1979 on Line A1. First section of the line was put into construction in mid-1978. Tunneling work is expected to be completed in 1980. The final planned network will be 55 miles by 1995.

Government approval has been given for a new metro in Bratislava.