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# PRIMER PLANO

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EL NUEVO DIA - SABADO 25 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 1995

## Se anotan para 'montarse' en el Tren

Por WALDO D. COVAS QUEVEDO  
DE EL NUEVO DIA

CUATRO COMPANIAS sometieron propuestas esta semana para competir por el contrato de entre \$300 y \$400 millones para construir un segmento del Tren Urbano y suplir los vagones, rieles y sistemas para todo el trayecto, informó ayer el Departamento de Transportación y Obras Públicas.

Las empresas fueron identificadas como Grupo Tren Urbano, integrado por Bombardier Transit Corp., Fluor Daniel Inc. y Gribben Architects & Engineers; Tren Urbano Consortium, integrado por SNC-Lavalin International y Breda Construzioni Internazionali SpA; Siemens Transit Team, integrado por Siemens Transportation Systems Inc., Juan R. Requena Associates y Alternate Concepts, Inc.; y Constructores Tren Urbano, AEG Transportation Systems, Inc. e ICF Kaiser Engineers, Inc.

UNO DE los consorcios, el Raytheon-Kinkishiro-Indochu, se abstuvo de presentar su propuesta luego de que el DTOP rechazara la petición para aplazar la fecha

limite hasta el 22 de diciembre, informó Carlos I. Pesquera, secretario de la agencia, en conferencia de prensa.

A principios de mes, el consorcio Puerto Rico Metro, S.E. integrado por el fabricante de trenes suizo ABB Traction; Bird-DEI; ATE Ryder; DeLeuw, Cather & Co.; Lebron Associates; Basora and Rodriguez and Associates; Fitzbach and Moore; West Electric Corp.; Standard/Starco; Atlas Railroad Construction Co.; Del Valle Group, B.P.; y Marxuach, S.E., se retiró por problemas con el suministro de los vehículos.

En agosto pasado, los consorcios Construcciones y Auxiliar de Ferrocarriles, de España, y Sumitomo Corporation of America, de Japon, fueron excluidos del proceso por fallar en someter todos los requisitos establecidos.

CONSTRUCTORES TREN Urbano tiene base en Pittsburgh y sus trenes serían alemanes; Grupo Tren Urbano tiene base en San Juan y los vehículos serían canadienses; Siemens Transit Team tiene base en Nueva Jersey y los vehículos serían alemanes y Tren Urbano Consortium tiene base en Canadá y los vehículos serían italia-



La construcción del tren deberá comenzar en julio próximo.



Cuatro compañías sometieron propuestas esta semana para competir por el contrato de entre \$300 y \$400 millones para construir un segmento del Tren Urbano

nos. Pesquera explicó que se seleccionarán los consorcios finalistas para enero próximo y se recomendará la mejor propuesta en abril, cuando se firmará el contrato de entre \$300 y \$400 millones, más el pago por la operación del sistema durante cinco años.

La evaluación de las propuestas se hará en dos partes, explicó Pesquera. Primero se evaluarán los aspectos técnicos y luego se examinarán los documentos relacionados con la parte económica de los que hayan pasado el primer proceso. Los documentos, que consisten de cuatro cajas para cada uno de los proponentes, se encuentran en una bóveda estrictamente custodiada de la Oficina del Tren Urbano en la avenida Piñero. Muchos de los documentos serán mantenidos confidenciales mientras concluya el proceso.

UNA VEZ se determine cuáles continuarán en el proceso, el Comité de Evaluación, podrá optar por evaluar las modificaciones que hayan sometido los consorcios a los planes del DTOP y solicitar a los cualificados que sometan nuevas propuestas y modifiquen los costos originalmente propuestos.

El Comité está integrado por Carlos Colón de Armas, de la Autoridad de Carreteras y Transportación; Gabnel Rodríguez y Eric Zapata, del DTOP; Gabnel Rivera, del Banco Gubernamental de Fomento; Fred Salvucci y Rafael Jimenez, de la Oficina del Tren Urbano; y Jeffrey Fosbrook, del grupo interdisciplinario contratado por el

DTOP.

Pesquera enfatizó que el contrato no será adjudicado al mejor postor en términos económicos, sino al que mejor salga en una gradación a base de mejor utilidad, una combinación de precio y calidad. El Comité de Evaluación someterá su recomendación a la Junta de Subastas y esta hará su recomendación al Secretario, quien tendrá la última palabra.

LA CONSTRUCCION deberá comenzar en julio próximo y se espera que junto a los otros contratos que serán adjudicados posteriormente a un costo total de \$1,200 millones termine para el año 2001.

El primer contrato que será otorgado comprende un tramo de 2.5 kilómetros entre las estaciones de Torrimar, en Guaynabo, y Las Lomas, en Río Piedras, incluyendo ambas estaciones, así como los diseños y especificaciones de las construcciones del taller de mantenimiento, el centro de operaciones y las oficinas administrativas.

También incluye los vehículos a utilizar, se, los sistemas eléctricos y operacionales, las señales y otros elementos de comunicaciones, la coordinación y supervisión de los diseños y construcciones de los demás tramos y la operación y mantenimiento de todo el sistema por los primeros cinco a diez años.

EL TREN Urbano consiste de una ruta de 17 kilómetros entre Bavamon y Santurce, pasando por Guaynabo, Río Piedras y Hato Rey, que sería recorrida en 25 minutos a 55 millas por hora.

EL NUEVO DIA/HITO GUZMAN

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The San Juan Star - Saturday, December 30, 1995

LOCAL NEWS

# Pesquera hopes train is approved next month

## Public, agencies write letters about rail project

By MARIA SACCHETTI  
The STAR Staff

What does an insect laboratory in Río Piedras have in common with a shopping mall in Hato Rey? Both places will be affected by the proposed Tren Urbano, and owners were among nearly 30 people who penned their opinions about the rail transit project to the Department of Transportation and Public Works by the Dec. 28 public comment deadline.

Many of the letters were supportive missives from government agencies, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the local Department of Housing.

The letters mark the final hurdle in the department's efforts to obtain the approval of the Federal Transit Administration in Atlanta for the \$1 billion, 10.8-mile urban rail system, which will run from Bayamón to Santurce.

Unless the federal government's shutdown is prolonged by the Congressional battling over the budget, Transportation Secretary Carlos I. Pesquera hopes the FTA will review the letters and approve the project by the third week in January.

Next, the department will put the proposal up for approval of the Puerto Rico Planning Board, he said. Construction of the first phase of the train is slated to begin next year.

A few of the letters, which Pesquera made available to the STAR, raised concerns about the project. But Pesquera said he doubted the FTA would delay their approval of the rail system because he is actively working to solve most of the issues raised by the writers.

"For a project of such magnitude," Pesquera said, glancing at the letters, "these are not major controversies."

One negative letter came from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. William T. Porter of the CDC wrote that they oppose the project because of "serious negative consequences" to the CDC's property, including an insect research laboratory, in Río Piedras. Porter added that he is willing to hear the department's



STAR photo by David Villafra

About 30 people wrote to comment on the Tren Urbano project by the Dec. 28 deadline, said Department of Transportation and Public Works Secretary Carlos I. Pesquera. The Federal Transit Administration now must give its final approval for the \$1 billion Bayamón-to-Santurce urban rail transit system.

proposed solution.

The Tren Urbano, or urban train, was initially set to follow Highway 21, but transportation officials changed the route to let the train pass between the Veterans Hospital and the CDC buildings in order to access the Centro Médico in Río Piedras, which comprises 22 medical office buildings, Pesquera said.

Part of the system, which will be more than 20-feet above ground in this area, will pass through the VA's parking lot. The other part will move through the CDC ground, close to the laboratory, Pesquera said.

So far, the department has offered to build them a new "insectarium" on the same property, but farther away from the train, or relocate them to a building in the Centro Médico complex. This section of the train is not slated for construction until 1997, he said.

Porter could not be reached by telephone in Atlanta, possibly because of the federal shutdown.

Another writer, Jorge Fernández de Misión Industrial of Puerto Rico, was concerned that the Environmental Quality Board did not hold its own public hearings on the Tren Urbano project.

Pesquera said he understood that the EQB was present at hearings held earlier this year and that additional

bearings were unnecessary.

Officials of the Metropolitan Shopping Center, which houses Woolworth and a Grande supermarket on Muñoz Rivera Avenue in Hato Rey, wrote that they would have to "claim our rights" if they do not reach an agreement with the department over plans for their building.

Pesquera said talks with the shopping center "are very friendly." The department hopes to avoid the expropriation and eventual razing of the building, and plans to use only the rear section of the land for the train, he said.

The center would be the first mall connected to the train, he added.

The only complaint Pesquera was unaware of came from the Mercantil Plaza office building on the north end of Ponce de León Avenue in Hato Rey. Plaza representatives sent two letters in concern that the Tren Urbano will cover a northeast corner of their facility and cause noise and vibrations.

Pesquera said he is willing to meet with Plaza representatives about the matter.

Among other writers, the Municipality of Carolina asked to be included in the project and residents groups in Torrimar asked the department to help them close off Oviedo Street.

# IAU to ax exchange deal with Penn State

## New campus planned in Bayamón to include an engineering school

By JULIO GHIGLIOTTI  
Of The STAR Staff

An exchange program between Inter American and Pennsylvania State universities to allow low-income students to get an engineering degree at the stateside institution will be axed next year.

Engineering students at Inter American University said they were worried over the expected demise of the ex-

change program, which provides low income students an opportunity to get a degree from the highly rated stateside institution.

Alejandro Ruiz Acevedo, vice president for academic affairs and systemic planning at IAU, confirmed that the engineering exchange program is being terminated as of June 1996 because the university is about to open a new campus in Bayamón that will include an engineering school.

However, he said IAU would honor the program for those students already enrolled in it.

Students enrolled take all the pre-engineering courses required by the Penn State Engineering School at IAU's Metropolitan or San Germán campuses

— a period of about three years. If they maintain a grade-point average of 3.0 or higher, the students are automatically admitted into Penn State for the final two years of study for the degree in engineering.

"My family could not afford to pay full tuition at Penn State for five years; but they can, more or less, afford to pay tuition at Inter American and then the two years in Penn State include financial aid if you maintain your average above 3.5," said Juan Carlos Rivera Cruz, who is majoring in chemical engineering.

Rivera Cruz, one of three students who were interviewed by The STAR, completes his three years of preparatory studies in the spring and leaves for Penn State in the summer.

He and two other students, José Luis Torres Maldonado and Fareed Abdell Haylock Gozán, criticized the university administration for not providing affected students with timely information about what was being planned. That prompted rumors that the students enrolled in the program — known as the IAU Metropolitan Campus-Penn State Consortium — would end up forced to form part of the student body at the new Bayamón campus.

The rumors began to spread early in the current semester, and it was not until a meeting of the faculty on Nov. 16 that termination of the agreement with Penn State was announced, Rivera Cruz said.

"When the rumors began, I applied  
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LOCAL NEWS

**Historic resources in Tren Urbano's path**  
 A total 17 historic structures exist along the path of Tren Urbano but only four of them — located in the Río Piedras Historical District — will feel any impact.

Historic Resource	Impact	Impact of Alternative Alignments Considered	Mitigation Measures	Enhancement
Bayamón Historic District	None (w/mitigation)	N/A	Noise Wall and vibration mitigation	Commitment to maintain historic character of Barbosa St streetscape
Río Piedras Commercial Center Historic District	Direct impact on 14 properties including demolition of 4 historic bldgs and partial demolition of 2 historic bldgs. constructive vibration impacts	Mid-block sub-alignment demolition of 25-35 bldgs. Ponce de León Sub-alignment demolition of 40-50 bldgs	Vent shaft noise reduction design features design/location of shafts for visual compatibility vibration mitigation	
UPR Lower Campus Historic District	None (w/mitigation)	N/A	Vent shaft noise reduction	
UPR Campus Historic District	None (w/mitigation)	N/A	Vibration mitigation. Vent shaft noise reduction	

SOURCE: Department of Transportation and Public Works  
 STAR graphic by Gabriel Szoke. Compiled by Ivonne Garcia

# Train project threatens 6 buildings in Río Piedras

## Transportation must get historic committee's OK

By CHRIS HAWLEY  
 Of The STAR Staff

Six buildings in the historic Río Piedras business district would be completely or partially demolished to make way for the Tren Urbano, according to documents filed with federal agencies.

Four buildings near the end of Ponce de León Avenue — a bar, a business school, a laundry and a fonda — would be destroyed, according to documents submitted to the Federal Transit Administration and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation as one of the last steps toward U.S. government approval of the project. Two others would be turned into part of the underground train station.

The buildings that would be demolished are:

- Metro College, a business school, at 1164 Ponce de León Ave.
- La Gran Parada bar at 1152 Ponce de León Ave.
- A laundry and printing shop

next to La Gran Parada bar, at 6 Julián Blanco St.

■ La Fonda del Nene O'Neill restaurant at 1159 Ponce de León Ave.

The two structures that would be converted into the station's entrance are combination apartment-and-business buildings housing Love Expressions bridal shop and Manny's Cafe.

All of the buildings are within what planners call the Río Piedras Commercial Historical District, which includes the church, a plaza and the shops around it.

The zone is historically significant because it served as a trade and transportation center linking San Juan and the southern part of the island, according to Lilliane López, director of the State Historic Preservation Office.

To build in the historic zone, the Department of Transportation and Public Works, which is the agency responsible for Tren Urbano's development, must get permission from the historic preservation office and the federal agency that oversees it.

Original plans to build through the area would have required the demolition of 12 buildings, López said. She said after negotiating with the historic preservation office, Tren Urbano officials decided to tunnel under-

neath buildings. The four buildings that would be razed are located where the train goes underground.

"It was a trade-off," she said. "It seems as if it is the only way of getting the urban train into that area and it minimizes the impact to the historic district."

The federal council must still approve the "memorandum of agreement" between the transportation department and López's office that states conditions under which construction can be done. Transportation Secretary Carlos I. Pesquera said planners hope to see the agreement approved by the end of January.

López said the four buildings, which were constructed in the 1940s and 1950s, "are not as significant" as other buildings in the area.

The train also runs through three other historic districts — the center of Bayamón, the University of Puerto Rico Tower and Quadrangle and the university campus. The Casa Borbosa and the quadrangle area of the university are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

However, planners say buildings in the Bayamón district will not be affected, and the train will run underground through the university area.

# Residents wish to remember bridge with monument

By CHRIS HAWLEY  
 Of The STAR Staff

CATANO — It's not much of a landmark, but it's the only one the people of Ponce Blanco have.

It's a short, squat little bridge turned gray by the mud and exhaust from the endless flow of cars and trucks that pass over it on Highway 5 in Catano. It spans a muddy little stream called Malaria Creek. Architecturally, even experts admit it's pretty plain.

"But to us, it's historic," said Carmen Martínez, president of the Puente Blanco Residents Association. "I mean, the community is named after the bridge, and the community is not going to stop calling itself Puente Blanco after the bridge is gone."

Puerto Rico Bridge 381, known to the 1,500 people who live by it as Puente Blanco, or "white bridge," is due to be demolished next year in a \$3.2 million project to widen Highway 5 from two to four lanes. Residents say they don't mind its destruction — but they do want something to remember it by.

And so the residents association and highway planners are discussing immortalizing the little bridge by either erecting a sign or saving part of its parapet and building a small park around it.

"We kind of mentioned this offhand, that there's this bridge with no historical value that we're going to destroy," Roberto Vélez Benítez, a highway and Transportation Authority planner said. "But they said, 'Hey, this bridge does have some value. It's what the community is named after.'"

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## EDITORIAL

# Congress gives good news to urban train plan

In the midst of a threat of reduced federal funds because of the Republican revolution in Washington comes good news about Puerto Rico's urban train project.

Rep. Bud Shuster, R-Pa., chairman of the House Infrastructure and Transportation Committee, was briefed at La Fortaleza Monday on the island's train plans, and called the project "impressive" and "a very worthy project."

Just as important, he said, "this project is ahead of anything else being done in the United States; that's why we support it."

That is the best news heard so far regarding the urban train, being designed to bring light rail public transportation relief to the San Juan metropolitan area.

The project has a string of positives going for it and Shuster recognized them with enthusiasm. The need for a major public transportation initiative in crowded San Juan, teeming with vehicles, is obvious.

Then there is the happy circumstance that, as Shuster put it, "a substantial amount of the property along the [proposed route] is already owned by the government."

Add to that the fact that the Rosselló administration does not expect the federal government to bankroll the entire project. On the contrary, the commonwealth government is seeking just a third of the cost of the urban train from Washington.

Shuster is one of the new Republican heads of committees in the House and Senate, and having his support for the project is vital to its future. He said Monday that additional funding would come from the Highways and Transit Trust Fund, not from the general fund, and, thereby, not necessarily subject to some of the more rigorous cutting the general fund may undergo.

"There is money in the trust fund for high-priority projects . . . and I believe this is a very worthy project," Shuster said.

These are encouraging words for Transportation and Public Works Secretary Carlos Pesquera, his government team and the Boston consultants who have all been working assiduously for the success of a program that promises critical alleviation of San Juan's tangled traffic puzzle.

# Urban train project gets important OK; Shuster 'impressed'

## Congressional committee chief supports funding

By JULIO GHIGLIOTTI  
Of the STAR Staff

The chairman of a congressional committee on transportation described Puerto Rico's urban train project on Monday as "impressive" and "a very worthy project" that should not have any problems getting necessary funds.

Rep. Bud Shuster, R-Penn., chairman of the House Infrastructure and Transportation Committee, made the comments after a meeting with Gov. Rosselló at La Fortaleza.

Shuster, who was accompanied by Transportation and Public Works Secretary Carlos Pesquera, said he was very impressed by the briefing he received "on the very exciting transit project during the meeting with Rosselló and by the management team put together by the Puerto Rican government.

"I have not seen a transit project in the [United States] that has the potential for success that this one has," Shuster said, adding that he was "pleased that we have provided funding for this project."

He was referring to \$5 million approved by Congress in September for the project's design stage. The House had authorized \$10 million but the allocation was cut in half before the Senate agreed to approve it.

Shuster's words echoed those of the head of the Federal Transportation Administration, Gordon J. Linton, who said in October that the urban train project was "one of the best investments in transportation in the United States."

Shuster was particularly impressed

with the fact that the Congress is only being asked to fund a third of the cost of the project, which has been estimated at \$937 million.

"An enormous plus for the project," Shuster said, "is that a substantial amount of the property along the [proposed route of the light rail system] is already owned by the [commonwealth] government."

The congressman said that the modern technologies to be used in the light rail system also give the project a decided advantage for funding and, because of the island's relationship with Latin America, would represent a bridge to that area for U.S. entrepreneurs.

"This project is ahead of anything else being done in the United States; that's why we support it," he said.

Obtaining the additional funding sought by Puerto Rico for the project should not be a problem, either, despite the Republican-dominated Congress' intention to cut spending.

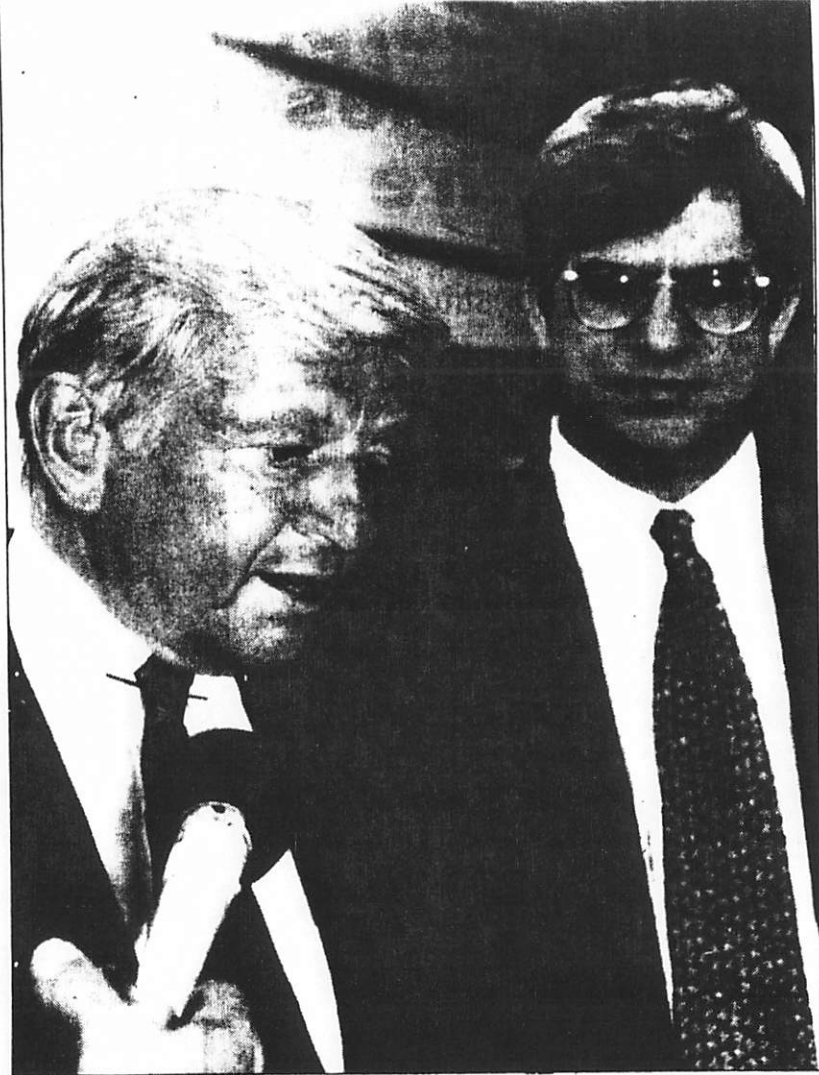
The urban train project, he said, would be funded by the Highways and Transit Trust Fund, not the general fund. The trust fund is fed by taxes on gasoline and is used strictly for transit projects.

"There is money in the trust fund for high-priority projects . . . and I believe this is a very worthy project," Shuster said.

He said that his committee will be holding hearings later this month on the national highway system but did not expect that Puerto Rico's urban train project would come up "because we'll be dealing with problem areas."

Pesquera, who stood beside Shuster as he talked with reporters, said that Congress will be dealing with the national highway system issue for the next two years.

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STAR photo by Farah Rivers

Rep. Bud Shuster, left, chairman of the House Infrastructure and Transportation Committee, said after a meeting with Gov. Rosselló at La Fortaleza Monday that Puerto Rico's urban train project should have no trouble getting millions in federal funds. At right is Transportation and Public Works Secretary Carlos Pesquera.

DEPARTAMENTO DE TRANSPORTACION Y OBRAS PUBLICAS  
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## Train

The Rosselló administration hopes to begin construction of the first phase of the project — an 11.8-mile route that would connect Bayamón, Río Piedras, Hato Rey and parts of Santurce — by 1996 and have the first

trains operating by the summer of 2001.

Shuster said the timetable, if it is met, would give Puerto Rico “a leg-up” in its effort to host the 2004 Olympic Games.

The congressman from Pennsylva-

nia said he was familiar with Puerto Rico because he and his family had been vacationing on the island during the last 30 years.

“We go to Luquillo, Fajardo, La Parguera — we’ve gone around the whole island,” he said.

# Tren Urbano may be godsend for Landrau residents

## Design plans call for vacant crime strip to be used in rail route

By **SUSAN THURSTON**  
Of The STAR Staff

The Tren Urbano may provide long-awaited relief to residents of the Landrau Urbanization, who have been battling traffic, garbage and crime associated with a vacant strip of land set aside for a road more than 40 years ago.

The narrow stretch runs in a straight line parallel to P.R. 21 from the Martínez Nadal Expressway (P.R. 20) to De Diego Avenue.

It's designed to provide Bayamón and Guaynabo residents better access to Río Piedras, specifically the Veterans Hospital, Metropolitan Bus Authority and Medical Center.

A significant portion separates Landrau Urbanization and the Vista Hermosa public housing project, which has been said to have 11 around-the-clock drug puntos.

The project was the third taken over by

the police and National Guard as part of the current administration's *mano dura* stance against crime. It is currently undergoing extensive rehabilitation.

A planner with the Department of Transportation and Public Works said the strip of land was designated as a road as far back as 1947, but is currently part of the Tren Urbano route.

Plans do call for widening P.R. 21 — the old Río Piedras Road — to alleviate traffic congestion in the area. The curvy, two-lane road serves as a main route for crosstown traffic.

Victor Pagán, a retired doctor who owns the United Medical Business Organization (UMBO) building on nearby San Patricio Avenue, calls the strip the "missing link" that would prevent heavy truck and trailer traffic from using San Patricio to get to De Diego.

"San Patricio was not made for heavy traffic. When 18-wheelers drive by, the buildings tremble," said Pagán, pointing to large cracks and potholes in the street that create an obstacle course for vehicles.

He wants the government to follow through with the original plans to construct a four-lane road on the publicly owned land located in the municipality of San Juan.

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## Importancia del Tren Urbano

EL TREN Urbano es un proyecto, con todos los requisitos, para convertirse en realidad en la fecha fijada, y lo que es más, contribuirá significativamente a resolver el gran problema de la transportación en el área metropolitana de Puerto Rico", dijo el secretario de Transportación y Obras Públicas, Dr. Carlos Pesquera, en la reunión-almuerzo efectuado de la matrícula de la Asociación de Contratistas Generales, en el Hotel Condado Plaza.

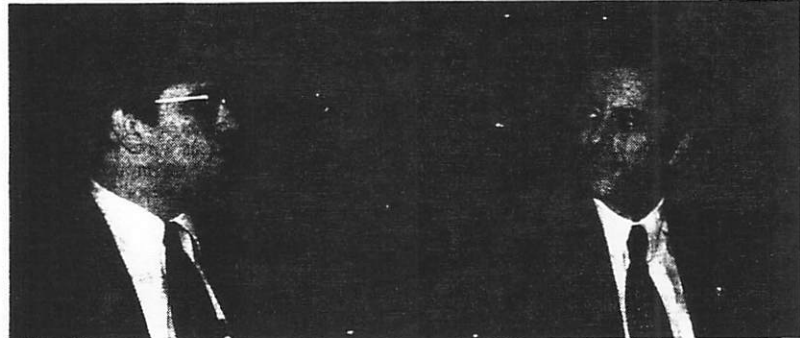
Fue una interesante charla del Dr. Pesquera, recibida con gran optimismo por los asistentes a la actividad.

Pesquera hizo un amplio enfoque sobre

el amplio plan de ampliación de carreteras y vías importantes, que han sido diseñadas para aminorar las distancias entre los distintos puntos de la Isla, que también favorece al área metropolitana.

También el Dr. Pesquera respondió a todas las preguntas de los asistentes, y anunció que "en breve presentará un informe actualizado más completo sobre el proyecto del Tren Urbano".

El Ing. José Domingo Pérez, presidente de la Asociación de Contratistas Generales de Puerto Rico, tuvo frases de elogio para el Dr. Pesquera, por el enfoque que ofreció a la matrícula de la institución que preside.



A la izquierda, Ing. José Domingo Pérez, presidente de la Asociación de Contratistas Generales, y a derecha, Dr. Carlos Pesquera, Secretario del Departamento de Transportación y Obras Públicas, durante la reunión almuerzo de la matrícula del AGC.

# Federal funding pledge sought for Tren Urbano

## Pesquera 'confident' U.S. government will approve \$280 million

By ROBERT FRIEDMAN  
STAR Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Transportation and Public Works Secretary Carlos Pesquera said Tuesday he was "very confident" that the federal government would authorize in 1996 some \$280 million over five or six years for Puerto Rico to build Tren Urbano.

A funding pledge could be obtained next year when the ISTEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act) comes up for re-authorization for five or six years, the secretary said.

ISTEA's current authorization runs from 1991 to 1997.

"We will be looking for a full funding grant agreement, which will mean that Congress is willing to federally assist the project" over the time it takes to build it, Pesquera said.

He said the commonwealth government will press to get the agreement before construction starts in the summer of 1996. Plans are for the 11.8-mile system — which will run between Bayamón, Río Piedras, Hato Rey and Santurce — to begin operating in 2002.

If Puerto Rico does receive the full funding agreement, the money will still have to be appropriated annually.

The Puerto Rico government is hoping that the federal funds will pay for one-third of the light rail project for metropolitan San Juan. The commonwealth, which earlier put the cost of Tren Urbano at \$930 million, now says it will total \$965.7 million.

The \$280 million would be added to other federal grants the commonwealth

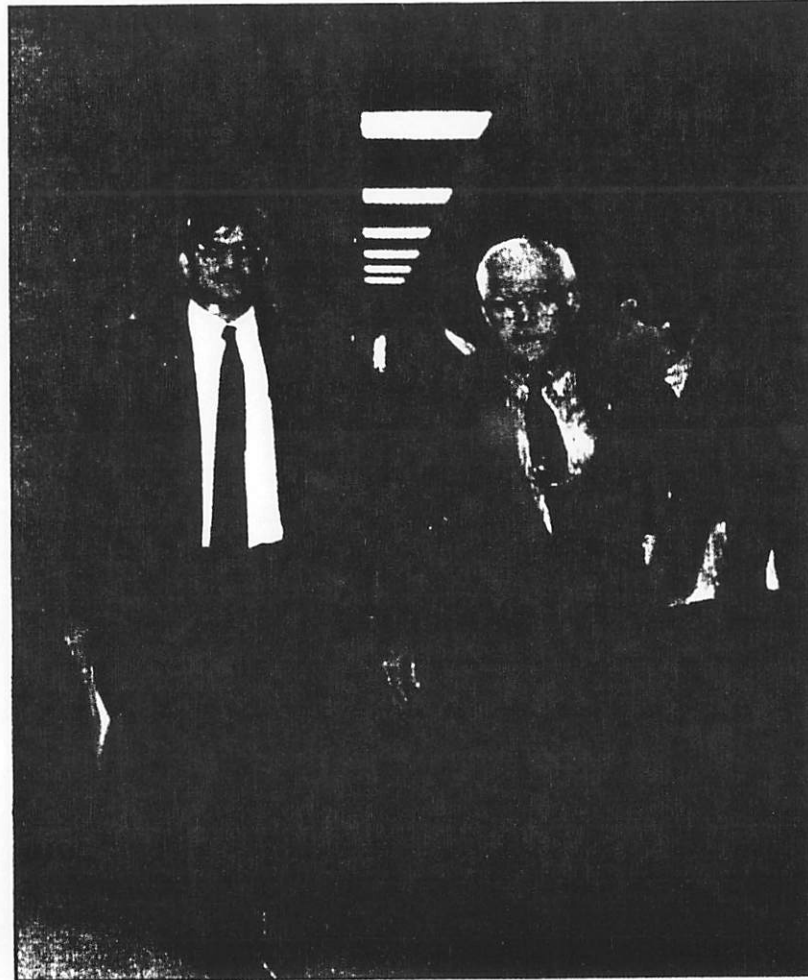


Photo special to the STAR by Louise Kraft

hopes to receive for the project to total some \$320 million. The local government would invest some \$393 million and the rest of the funding would come from "innovative financing" involving the private sector and is still in the planning stages, Pesquera said.

He made his remarks in an interview before testifying at a hearing of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation. Pesquera asked the panel to appropriate \$35 million for the designing, planning and relocation stage now going on.

Last year, a House committee authorized \$40 million over two years, but the island wound up with only \$5 million from House-Senate conferees. Pesquera asked Tuesday for the remaining amount.

Pesquera said the project was getting bipartisan support in Congress. The latest key legislator to come on board is Rep. Bud Shuster, R-Pa., chairman of the House Infrastructure and Transportation Committee. In a visit to the island in February, Shuster called the project "impressive" and "very worthy."

Shuster is pushing legislation that will take transportation trust funds out of the federal government's general budget. This would mean that the some \$19 billion in the trust fund, obtained through gas taxes, could be used solely for transportation projects.

**Transportation and Public Works Secretary Carlos Pesquera, left, and Resident Commissioner Carlos Romero Barceló walk the halls of the U.S. Capitol on Tuesday on their way to a hearing of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation.**

# UPR se une al proyecto

Por Odalys Rivera

D E D I A L O G O

**E**studiantes y profesores de tres escuelas graduadas de la Universidad de Puerto Rico (UPR) participarán en el diseño del «Tren Urbano», considerado como uno de los proyectos más importantes de este siglo, según informó a *Diálogo* el secretario del Departamento de Transportación y Obras Públicas (DTOP), Carlos I. Pesquera.

Se espera que en los próximos cinco años, cincuenta alumnos de las escuelas de Ingeniería, Arquitectura y Planificación de la UPR participen en el proyecto de intercambio junto con otros cincuenta jóvenes del Massachusetts Institute of



Carlos I. Pesquera, secretario del DTOP (foto por Ricardo Alcaraz)

Technology (MIT), quienes deberán orientar sus trabajos de tesis en torno a problemas relacionados con la propuesta del tren.

La iniciativa, que responde a un acuerdo entre la UPR y MIT, cuenta con el apoyo del Departamento de Transportación y Obras Públicas y del grupo de consultores encargados del Tren Urbano que se han comprometido a emplear durante los veranos a los estudiantes participantes.

Los profesores Antonio A. González, Benjamín Colucci y Felipe Luyanda del Departamento de Ingeniería Civil de la Escuela de Ingeniería del Recinto Universitario de Mayagüez (RUM); Anibal Sepúlveda, de la Escuela Graduada de Planificación; y Esteban Sennyey, de la Escuela de Arquitectura del Recinto de Río Piedras, supervisarán la colaboración de la UPR.

Pesquera indicó que el proyecto suple la necesidad del DTOP de utilizar al máximo los recursos locales y de servir como puente para la transferencia tecnológica a lugares menos afortunados en América Latina.

El Secretario, que proviene de la facultad de ingeniería del RUM, destacó que la UPR no podía permanecer al margen del proyecto, máxime cuando un esfuerzo de esta envergadura requiere del «insumo» de diferentes comunidades.

El doctor Antonio González, uno de los principales promotores de la iniciativa, no descartó que en un



## Universitarios participan en el Tren Urbano

Un conjunto diverso de profesores universitarios y estudiantes participan en el proceso de diseño y planificación del tren urbano. [11]

futuro puedan incorporarse al programa estudiantes de otras disciplinas como Economía y Sociología. El profesor del recinto mayagüezano describió la experiencia como una oportunidad única para impartir educación de otra manera y destacó la interacción que el proyecto propicia entre los futuros ingenieros, planificadores y arquitectos. De hecho, informó que el primer grupo de estudiantes de MIT viajó a la isla durante el mes de diciembre.

González indicó que ya para el próximo mes se darán nuevas solicitudes para el taller que se celebrará durante el verano en el MIT. Un comité evaluador seleccionará los candidatos de acuerdo con las referencias que presenten y con su ejecución académica.

El grupo de los primeros diez estudiantes lo componen: Carmen González y Ariel Félix, de Planificación; Luis Moreschi, Jessica Grannell,

Javier Irizarry, Edgar Rodríguez y Miguel Pellot, de Ingeniería; y Susana López, Rafael Félix y José Irizarry de Arquitectura.

En los talleres en el MIT estos jóvenes participaron en charlas académicas y conocieron la oficina del tren urbano en Boston. Los emprendedores estudiantes no se conformaron con esto y varios de ellos visitaron el tren de Caracas para tener otro marco de referencia.

Entre los trabajos de estos estudiantes figuran: Evaluación y análisis sobre características de operación y servicios relacionadas a los sistemas de trenes; Identificación de materiales no convencionales resistentes que podrían usarse en la construcción del



Parte del equipo universitario lo integran (desde la izquierda): el profesor Esteban Sennyey y Rafael Félix, de Arquitectura; Ariel Félix, Carmen González, y el profesor Anibal Sepúlveda, de Planificación; y José Irizarry, de Arquitectura. [foto por Ricardo Alcaraz]

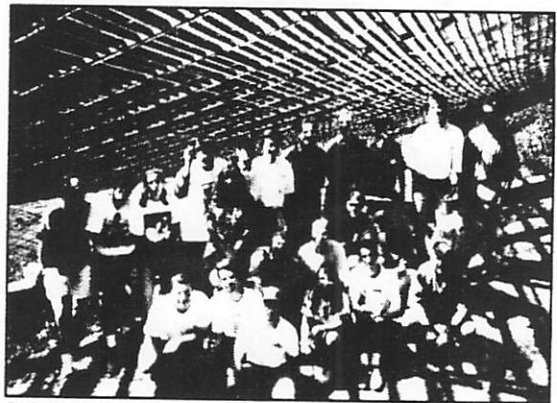
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*Portada*

## del Tren Urbano



Los doctores Antonio González (segundo a la izquierda) y Anibal Sepúlveda (cuarto en ese orden) acompañaron al grupo al Metro de Caracas. [foto por Benjamín Colucci]



Profesores y estudiantes de la UPR y del MIT visitaron el Observatorio de Arecibo. [foto por Carmen González]

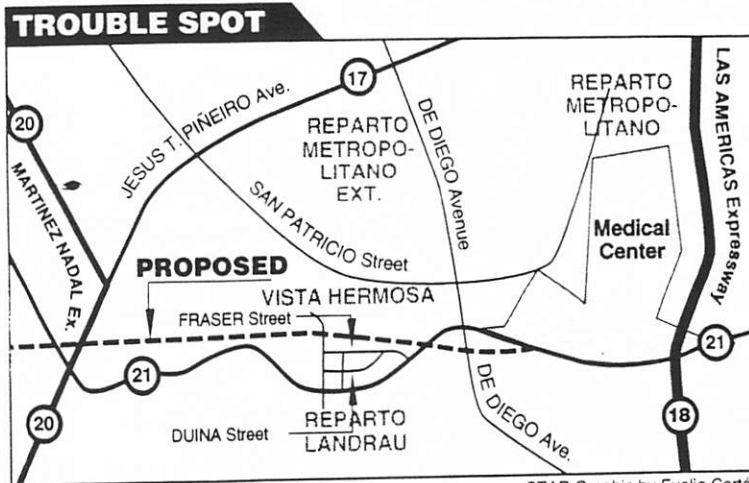
tren; El tren como alternativa viable para la congestión vehicular en San Juan; La integración de los carros públicos y otros sistemas de transportación que servirían al tren; La integración de las comunidades aledañas a las estaciones de pasajeros; y La concepción estética en el diseño de las estaciones y sus entornos.

El profesor Sepúlveda, de Planificación, destacó la oportunidad que el proyecto ofrece a los alumnos para estudiar la renovación urbana que propiciará el tren. Además resaltó que los jóvenes incorporarán una visión interdisciplinaria a sus trabajos de investigación. Por su parte, el profesor Sennyey comentó que la experiencia permitirá a los estudiantes de Arquitectura descubrir otros campos de trabajo además del diseño de edificios y puentes. Añadió que aunque el proyecto del tren no se desarrolle, la experiencia será una huella imborrable que preparará al país para no depender tanto de los consultores extranjeros.

A principios de siglo, Puerto Rico contaba con un sistema ferroviario en toda la isla, pero éste fue eliminado. La iniciativa actual intentará restablecer este medio de transportación pero sólo a nivel del área metropolitana. Se espera que el proyecto, cuyo costo se estima en \$935 millones, esté listo para el año 2001.

*2*

**LINEAS**



STAR Graphic by Evelio Cortés

He laments it was not included in the plan to improve the intersection of the Nadal expressway at P.R. 21, which currently is under construction.

"The missing link is far more important than the intersection, but no one knows about it. No one knows it was supposed to be a short cut for heavy traffic," said Pagán, who's been practicing family medicine in the area for more than four decades.

Over the years, the strip and surrounding areas have become a dumping ground for trash. This week, in fact, crews from San Juan's Environmental Control Department attempted to clear Calle Duina, which was blocked by garbage, old appliances and tires.

Residents of neighboring Fraser Street said past efforts to clean it up, however, have been quickly thwarted by nighttime dumping. Signs warning of \$100 fines for littering are nearly buried by trash.

Pigs poking through trash is a common site in the area. Neighbors say they come from a pen someone set up in the open land corridor.

Residents say the strip, overgrown with bushes and trees, attracts drug users and criminals. One man, who preferred not to identify himself for fear of reprisal, said "he could write a book" on all the crime that has touched him in the 38 years he has lived in the area, including being stabbed.

Resident Jack Marrero admitted it "takes guts to live here," but is committed to waiting for the land to be developed, as was promised when he bought his home 18 years ago.

Should the train come through, "I want to sell my home for profit. One way or another the area will have to go commercial," Marrero said.

Public hearings on the Tren Urbano are expected to begin in April after the draft environmental impact statement is published in the Federal Registry and the public has had a chance to review it. The statement includes the preferred route alignment.

Construction is expected to begin sometime next summer and last five to six years.



STAR photo by Humberto Trias Jr.

Dr. Víctor Pagán shows off the huge piles of garbage that litter a corridor of government-owned land near P.R. 21 and De Diego Avenue in San Juan. The land is expected to be used for the Tren Urbano project.

# Urban train project moving right along

BY MERIEMIL RODRIGUEZ

The draft of the environmental impact statement on Puerto Rico's billion-dollar mass-transit rail system, the urban train, appears in the Federal Register on March 24. The Commonwealth Department of Transportation & Public Works will then have 45 days to get the community input to produce the final document required to seek the \$300 million in federal funds needed for the project.

So it is not surprising that the team working on the urban train office at the old Blue Cross building in Hato Rey is burning the candle until late in the evening. The project is poised to become a model for the entire U.S.

Not only will this train help alleviate part of the traffic congestion that threatens to turn the San Juan metropolitan area into a giant rush-hour traffic bottleneck, but it also will create 15,000 jobs during construction and 400 permanent jobs when the first of four phases is finished in 2001, local Transportation Secretary Carlos Pesquera told CARIBBEAN BUSINESS.

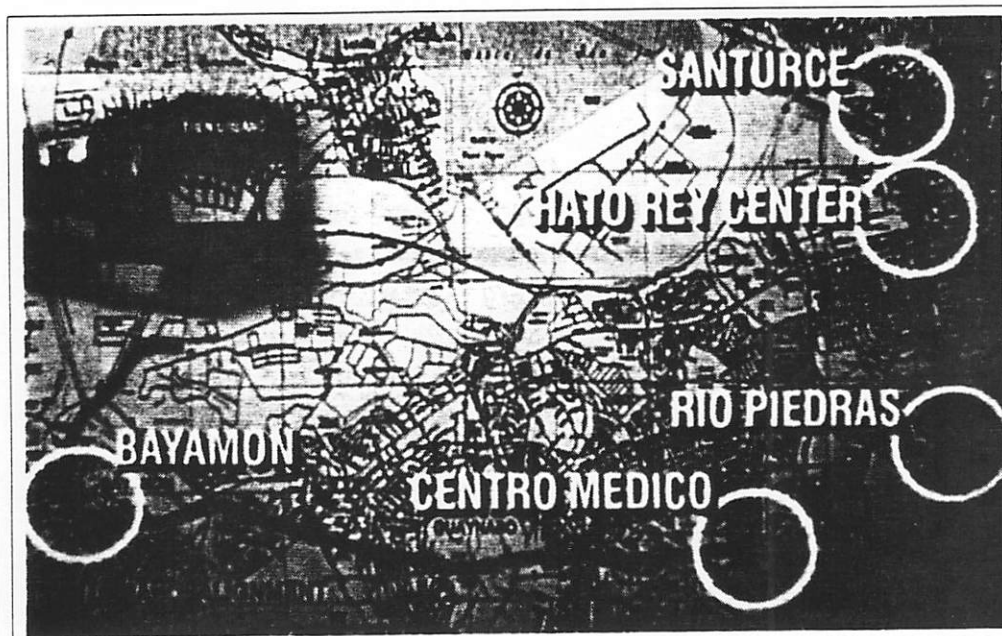
The environmental impact statement has a press embargo until Friday, so Pesquera would not comment on it. He did say that having the draft of the document, which was revised and accepted by the

use will be in accordance to what is planned for the areas. There are no habitats of rare or endangered species in the area, and there is only one archaeological site, in Rio Piedras. However, all these specifics will be discussed at the community hearings.

The train route begins in Bayamon, near the main business district, and ends in Santurce's Sagrado Corazon sector with 16 stops in urban, sports, government, learning and residential sectors and public transportation transfer centers. Development is taking into account environmental, land use, water and other important factors, such as the existence of any hazardous waste sites along its path.

The train will travel at about 55 miles per hour and cross two rivers, serving more than 100,000 people per day. A team of fare analysts will determine the cost of a ride, features and mode of paying the fare based on existing formulas for similar trains elsewhere.

A Full Funding Grant Agreement between Puerto Rico and the U.S. government will enable the urban train to become a full participating program in federal funds. The train has already received \$5 million in planning funds, and Pesquera is seeking \$20 million for the 1995-96 fiscal year. At the same time, the urban train is being positioned for



The first phase of the urban train will extend from Bayamon to Santurce.

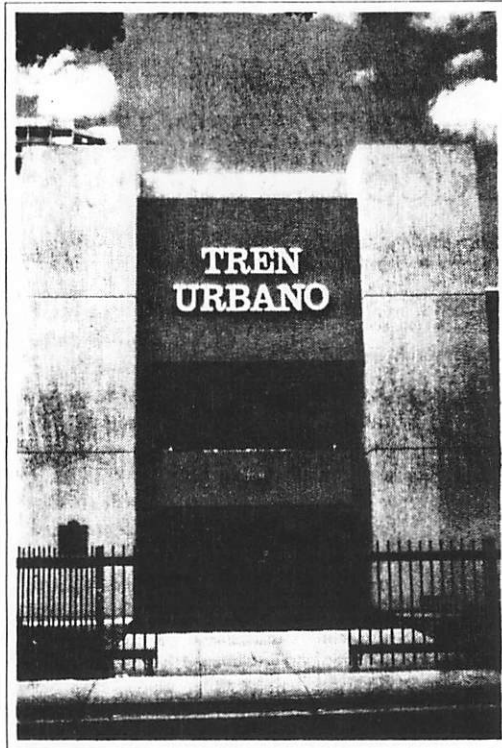
Federal Transportation Administration, sets the stage for two days of public hearings during the first week of April.

Pesquera also outlined a timetable of events that will lead to getting what is called a Record of Decision from the U.S. government in November that will qualify the project to get federal funds for construction and right-of-way acquisitions. Land

inclusion in the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Act when it is revised in fiscal year 1996-97.

"Part of the funds for the urban train will come from this legislation that is revised about every six years," said Pesquera, who recently testified before the U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation. "Our efforts are now centered on

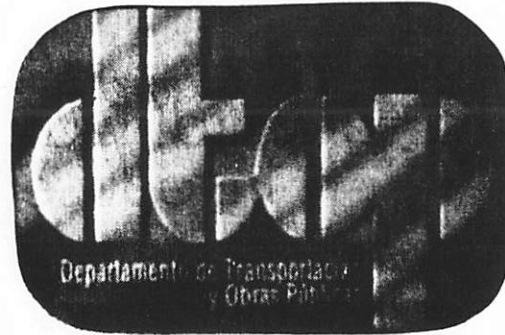
GOVERNMENT



Office of the Urban Train in the former Blue Cross building on Central Avenue in Hato Rey

obtaining the long-term federal funding."

The urban train group also is working on the procurement guidelines to ensure that Puerto Rico



contractors have an opportunity to bid for the jobs available. "Construction will be done to coordinate the technical aspects so that some of the legs of the train route can be tested," Pesquera said. Construction is due to begin in the summer of '96.

In 1993, the project was selected as one of four turnkey demonstration projects by the Federal Transportation Administration. Several alternatives were considered besides the train, such as adding more buses, but this would only add to the congestion, it was decided. ■

# Tren Urbano impact report released

## Public urged to voice its opinion on the project

By SUSAN THURSTON  
Of The STAR Staff

The Department of Transportation and Public Works on Friday released the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Tren Urbano, setting the wheels in motion for the public to comment on the project.

Residents are encouraged to give their input either by mail or in person at a public hearing set from 2 to 9 p.m. April 27 at the Tren Urbano offices on Piñero Avenue.

Copies of the report are available at public libraries or at Tren Urbano exhibits at Plaza Las Américas, San Patricio Plaza or Río Hondo Plaza through May 15, when all comments are due.

Transportation Secretary Carlos Pesquera said the release of the 1½-inch thick preliminary impact statement marks a shift in gears in the

project, which has been in the conceptual stages for more than 25 years.

"People for the first time will be able to find out if their homes will be affected," said Pesquera.

The plan calls for a 12-mile light rail system connecting Bayamón, Río Piedras, Hato Rey and Santurce. It's been touted as a key to solving the metropolitan area's traffic woes.

Transportation officials are hoping federal funds will pay for one-third of the \$965.7 million project. The local government is expected to kick in some \$393 million, with the rest coming from other sources involving the private sector, which are still in the works.

The price, earlier estimated at \$930 million, takes into account the cost of inflation over the next several years.

Based on 1992 dollars, the cost was calculated at \$766 million. The \$965.7 million price tag calls for passing the train down Muñoz Rivera Avenue. Should the train go through the center of Río Piedras — the preferred route — it would cost another \$150 million, Pesquera said.

The stretch through Río Piedras,

either along Ponce de León Avenue or an alternative route east and parallel to Ponce de León, would be the only underground segment of the project. The rest would be on ground level or elevated.

While more expensive, transportation officials maintain going through Río Piedras would better improve access to the town center and the University of Puerto Rico than the Muñoz Rivera route.

"Transportation-wise it's much better to go through Río Piedras," Pesquera said.

They also prefer a mid-block alignment that runs parallel to Ponce de León, as it will affect fewer businesses. The alternative plan to go directly underneath Ponce de León would require destroying several buildings.

Fred Salvucci, former Secretary of Transportation in Massachusetts who's now serving as a Tren Urbano consultant, said these commercial buildings would probably never be rebuilt, as their clientele would find other places to go during the construction.

"Going with the mid-block alignment will affect a few stores along the way, but we'll have a better chance

everyone will survive the construction process and afterwards come out ahead," Salvucci said.

Public input will help determine which path is taken, Pesquera said. A decision on the alignment will be made by August, when the final Environmental Impact Statement is submitted to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration.

Approval of the final statement is expected in November, after which federal funds can be spent to acquire land needed for the project. Construction is scheduled to begin in the summer of 1996, with an opening date set for 2001.

Construction would start along the south stretch from Bayamón to Río Piedras, where a significant portion of the right-of-way already has been set aside. It would also involve construction of the train yard.

Three locations have been identified for the yard: the Luchetti site at the far west end of the route in Bayamón's industrial park near the Goya factory and the Department of Corrections Detention Center, the Hogar del Niño

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From Page 3

## **Train**

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site just west of P.R. 19 near Torrimar and Garden Hills; and the Metropolitan Bus Authority site south of P.R. 21 near the Veterans Hospital and Centro Médico.

Should the yard be built at the Hogar del Niño or MBA locations, a 2.3-kilometer stretch from the Bayamón Center and Luchetti stations would be eliminated, at a savings of \$30 million to \$40 million. These savings could be invested in the underground Río Piedras project, Pesquera said.

Transportation officials prefer the Hogar del Niño site, which is owned by the Puerto Rico Land Administration and used by the Juvenile Institutions Administration as a detention center.

Getting residents' support may be difficult, however, considering the use of the land has been debated for more than two decades. Plans to develop the land as a commercial center or high-density housing have been thwarted.

Tren Urbano officials see the yard as an opportunity for residents to settle the issue once and for all. They maintain measures to minimize impact of the yard on the surrounding communities should offset any reservations residents may have.

"They have a chance to have the uncertainty replaced by certainty," said Pesquera, who grew up in the area.

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## Respalda el tren urbano un senador demócrata

Por **FLORIBEL DELGADO**  
de EL NUEVO DIA

El **TREN** Urbano recibió ayer el respaldo del senador John Kerry, quien se comprometió con el gobierno local en

defender el proyecto en Washington y así conseguir los fondos federales necesarios para su construcción.

En una breve visita a la Isla el senador demócrata señaló que el Congreso debe considerar el proyecto del Tren Urbano como un desarrollo que podrá solidificar la economía en

Puerto Rico.

"Creo que el Congreso va a comprender que muchos de los problemas que aun no se han resuelto en Puerto Rico se podrían resolver, porque están conectados a este tipo de desarrollo", especificó Kerry, senador del estado de Massachusetts, quien forma parte del comité de Comercio, Ciencia y Transportación en el Senado de los Estados Unidos.

"Si están preocupados con la Sección 936, y desean crear empleos, a la vez que se fortalezca la economía que ayude a las personas a decidir sobre el futuro de Puerto Rico, este es un proyecto importante a desarrollar", señaló.

Carlos I. Pesquera, secretario de Transportación y Obras Públicas, se reunió ayer con Kerry en un hotel de San Juan donde discutieron la viabilidad del proyecto urbano. Kerry, quien describió como "estupidos" los recortes pre-

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El senador, John Kerry, izquierda, conversa con Carlos Pesquera, secretario de Transportación y Obras Públicas, en torno a la importancia del Tren Urbano.

supuestanos planteados por el Congreso los últimos meses, señaló que se opondrá a cualquier reducción de fondos que ponga en peligro los proyectos de transportación urbana, especialmente si éstos amenazan la construcción del Tren Urbano en los próximos años.

PESQUERA señaló que su administración se encuentra en la "ruta" de conseguir el Acuerdo de Fondos Totales ("Full Fund Agreement"), que destinaria \$300 millones al tren, necesarios para la primera fase de construcción del proyecto.

Según explicó el Secretario de Transportación, el proyecto ya ha recibido fondos federales dos años consecutivos, además de que la Declaración de Impacto Ambiental (DIA) se encuentra en su etapa final, por lo que no duda que se le asigne el presupuesto indispensable para su construcción.

Si el Congreso no asigna los fondos millonarios totales el próximo año, cuando se planifica dar inicio a la construcción del tren, el gobierno local se encargará de cabildear por los fondos necesarios para ese año y continuará sus gestiones el año próximo, explicó Pesquera.

Hasta la fecha el Tren Urbano ha conseguido que se aprueben \$5 millones para este año, a los que se suman \$5 millones adicionales que le asignó Pesquera de la partida federal que recibió en el '95 para la transportación en la Isla y \$7.5 millones para el año próximo.

El costo del proyecto se estima en \$965 millones que podría aumentar con la inflación de aquí al comienzo del nuevo siglo. El tren recorrerá 13 municipios en la zona metropolitana de San Juan y transportará alrededor de 114,000 pasajeros de los 1.3 millones de residentes en el área.

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Arturo Carrón dijo que la pérdida de fondos 936 repercutirá negativamente en la economía.

EL NUEVO DIA, SABADO 21 DE OCTUBRE DE 1995

# Temor bancario a la reacción en cadena

Por **SOFIA MUÑOZ**  
ESPECIAL PARA EL NUEVO DIA

**FAJARDO** - A la industria bancaria se le retrasa el recobro de préstamos si desaparecen los fondos 936 debido a que esto provocará altos niveles de desempleo entre las empresas.

Así lo expresó Arturo Carrón, el vicepresidente ejecutivo de la Asociación de Bancos de Puerto Rico, quien, a su vez, explicó que la pérdida de estos fondos repercutirá en la economía y, por consecuencia, en la banca que es un "reflejo de la economía".

"Si los empleos se pierden como es muy probable que se pierdan, entonces eso afecta la capacidad de pago del consumidor y en la medida que esto se afecta, se afecta la capacidad de cobro del que le prestó el dinero", aseguró Carrón. Es decir, si una persona tiene un préstamo y queda desempleado la capacidad que esta va tener de repararle al banco va a ser reducida o casi mínima, añadió.

De la misma manera, las tasas de interés de los préstamos subirán si derogan la Sección 936. Con estos fondos las tasas son más baratas pero, de no existir estos fondos los bancos se venían en la obligación de aumentar sus tasas, señaló Carrón.

**CARRION HIZO** sus expresiones durante la 24ta. Convención de la Asociación de Bancos de Puerto Rico llevada a cabo en el Hotel El Conquistador de Fajardo.

Por otra parte, si desaparece la Sección, los presta-

mos hipotecarios, comerciales y de financiamiento al gobierno que hace la industria bancaria con fondos 936 tendrían que ser sustituidos por fondos más caros, dijo Carrón.

Los fondos 936 son "prestados" por los bancos a la economía con intereses razonables pero, sin embargo, si los mismos desaparecen totalmente la industria bancaria se venía obligada a buscar "sustitutos" para éstos, los cuales van a ser más caros, explicó Carrón. "El que va a pagar el precio de esos fondos más caros es el consumidor, llámese comerciante, dueño de una hipoteca, o gobierno- esos son los consumidores principales de esos fondos", dijo.

La Sección 936 del Código de Rentas Internas Federal podría ser eliminada dentro de un periodo de seis o de diez años. El jueves la Comisión de Finanzas del Senado estadounidense aprobó la reforma contributiva de la mayoría republicana que incluye la derogación de la 936 en seis años.

Por su parte, la Comisión de Medios y Arbitrios de la Cámara de Representantes propuso eliminar la Sección dentro de diez años, o en el 2005. Ambas versiones serán consideradas en una conferencia entre ambos cuerpos para decidir cuál es la que prevalecerá o si se llegará a un acuerdo.

**MIENTRAS TANTO**, la industria bancaria en Puerto Rico se prepara para que los efectos que esta derogación tenga en este sector no sean tan negativos. Sin embargo, hasta ahora no se sabe exactamente qué medidas se tomarán, cuando se tomarán ni cómo se tomarán, pero si se sabe que se tienen que llevar a cabo, indicó Carrón.

## Sobre rieles el Tren Urbano

Por **LEONOR MULERO**  
DE EL NUEVO DIA

**WASHINGTON** - Una conferencia congressional asignó ayer \$7.5 millones al Tren Urbano de Puerto Rico para el año fiscal 1996, informó la Subcomisión de Transportación de la Comisión de Asignaciones de la Cámara de Representantes.

Este es el segundo año consecutivo en que el Congreso asigna fondos para la fase de planificación y diseño de la primera fase del proyecto ferroviario de Puerto Rico. En 1995 le asignó \$5 millones.

La Cámara y el Senado llegaron este año a un punto medio, ya que la Cámara le había asignado \$15 millones y el Senado no había asignado ni un solo centavo para el tren. El costo total de la construcción de la primera fase es de alrededor de \$1,000 millones.

El comienzo de la construcción de esa fase, cuyo trayecto corre desde Bayamón al Sagrado Corazón, pasando por Río Piedras, está pautado para el verano de 1996.

El secretario de Transportación y Obras Públicas de Puerto Rico, Carlos Pesquera, expresó que "estoy muy satisfecho. Llevamos dos años cobijando fondos federales, tanto en un Congreso demócrata (en 1994), como en un Congreso republicano (el actual)". Adelantó que utilizará para el tren en 1996 otros \$10 millones federales, pero provenientes de la asignación regular para transportación que recibe su agencia.

Aparte de los \$5 millones asignados expresamente para el tren el año pasado, Pesquera usó en el tren otros \$5 millones de fondos federales. La suma de estos \$10 millones, con los otros \$18.5 millones que se utilizarán en 1996, elevan a \$28.5 millones la aportación federal para la fase de diseño.

**PESQUERA DIJO** que el próximo paso es someter la semana próxima la versión final de la Declaración de Impacto Ambiental (DIA) a la Administración Federal de Transportación (FTA). Una vez se publique en el Registro Federal, el público tiene 30 días para presentar sus comentarios a la agencia.

Esa DIA es necesaria para poder solicitarle a FTA que emita un Acuerdo de Fondos Totales (Full Funding Agreement), mediante el cual el Tren Urbano podrá contar con el total de fondos federales que le corresponden.

El gobierno de Puerto Rico espera obtener ese compromiso federal para abril de 1996, tras lo cual solicitará \$300 millones del gobierno federal para financiar la tercera parte del costo de la primera fase de construcción. Esa solicitud se realiza cuando el Congreso revise, en octubre 1997, la ley federal de sistemas de transportación, dijo Pesquera.

La subasta para escoger al consorcio que construirá el Tren se abrirá en el verano de 1996, un año antes del inicio de la construcción. Se espera que el contrato este firmado para fines de año.



Una conferencia congressional asignó ayer \$7.5 millones al proyecto ferroviario de Puerto Rico.

EL EQUIPO DIJAKAHER REITAS

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MIÉRCOLES 17 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 1995  
\$1.50

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Dispuesto el PPD a controlar sus anuncios

VEA LA PAGINA 9

## Asesinan a un ex candidato presidencial de Colombia



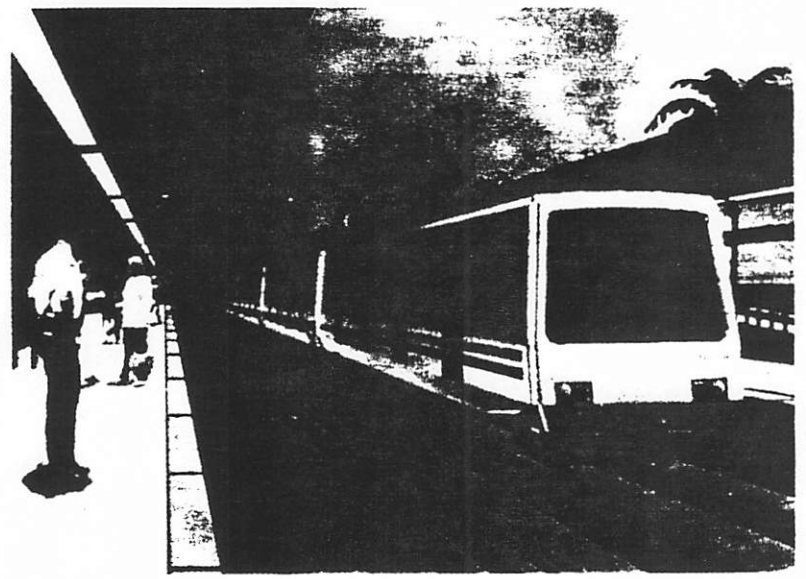
El presidente serbio, Slobodan Milosevic, estrecha la mano de su similar croata, Franjo Tudjman, durante la reunión celebrada ayer en la base aérea Wright Patterson, cerca de Dayton, Ohio. Mientras abajo, dos mujeres se abrazan luego de que una de ellas pudiera cruzar del lado serbio al lado bosnio en Sarajevo.

## Señales de paz en el diálogo serbocroata

VEA LA PAGINA 6



# Ajustes en la ruta del Tren Urbano



Varían algunos planes originales para la construcción, según la versión final de la Declaración de Impacto Ambiental del Tren Urbano

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# PORTAD

EL NUEVO DIA - VIERNES 3 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 1995

## Arrollados por el tren

Por WALDO D. COVAS QUEVEDO  
DE EL NUEVO DIA

LOS PLANES para la construcción del Tren Urbano complacerán a algunos sectores que urgieron cambios en las audiencias públicas y dejarán insatisfechos a otros, como algunos residentes del área de Torrimar, que se oponían tenazmente a una estación allí.

Por otro lado, el Gobierno dejó entrever la posibilidad de que el tren, que consiste de una ruta de 14 kilómetros entre Bayamón y la Parada 26 en Santurce, pueda llegar poco después del año 2001 hasta el Centro Gubernamental de Minillas, aunque ha sido excluido de la Declaración de Impacto Ambiental (DIA).

Entre los nuevos detalles de la DIA figura que el costo de construcción de la primera fase del proyecto ya va por los \$1,113.6 millones y se espera que el aparato consuma \$6.38 millones anuales en electricidad y entre \$27.8 y \$38.8 millones en su operación anual.

La versión final de la Declaración de Impacto Ambiental del Tren Urbano de San Juan estará disponible a partir de hoy, luego de revisarse tras el proceso de comentarios públicos del documento preliminar divulgado en marzo de 1995. La DIA final es un requisito indispensable para la estrategia del DTOP de cabildear a nivel federal para conseguir la asignación del equivalente de una tercera parte del costo del proyecto.

El SECRETARIO de Transportación y Obras Públicas, Carlos I. Pesquera, señaló que su departamento evaluó los planteamientos de las comunidades que se afectan por el proyecto y modificó algunos aspectos, pero dejó otros según planificado.

Entre los aspectos que quedaron según propuesto por el DTOP a pesar de la oposición de algunos miembros de la comunidad, figuran la estación del tren en Torrimar y la estación subterránea de Río Piedras en la avenida Ponce de León, entre las calles Arzuaga y Robles.

Algunos residentes del área de Torrimar se oponen tenazmente a una estación del Tren Urbano en su vecindario, aunque este atraviese de todos modos por el sector entre las estaciones de Jardines de Caparra y Las Lomas.

Mientras, vecinos de Río Piedras expresaron su preocupación de que la estación subterránea en el corazón del casco de su pueblo se convierta en una guarida de maleantes ante el rápido deterioro del área, especialmente por las noches.

Entre los ajustes que hizo el DTOP a la Declaración preliminar de Impacto Ambiental figura la reubicación de los talleres de mantenimiento de los trenes, la que será localizada cerca del Hogar del Niño en Guaynabo más lejos del área residencial y ubicados entre las viviendas y los rieles de almacenaje del tren para ocultarlos visualmente.

La opción de los talleres de Mantenimiento en Guaynabo eliminó parte de la ruta que necesitaban éstos, si eran establecidos en el sector industrial Luchetti, cercano a la fábrica de la Gova.

Aunque la versión es final, el público tendrá hasta el próximo 6 de diciembre para consignar sus comentarios respecto al documento publicado hoy.

PESQUERA EXPLICO que aún quedan cuatro procesos que se desarrollan simultáneamente: dos a nivel federal y dos a nivel insular. Los locales son la Consulta de Ubicación del Proyecto y el Plan Vial de Puerto Rico, los cuales dirimirán



Carlos I. Pesquera: reubicación de los talleres de mantenimiento.

la Junta de Planificación y se anticipa que se concluyan a principios del año entrante. El DTOP también tiene que cumplir con los requisitos federales del Departamento federal de Transportación (DOT) y el Departamento del Interior en un documento y con la Ley federal de Preservación Histórica, que requiere que la Oficina de Preservación Histórica de Puerto Rico y el Concilio Asesor Federal de Preservación Histórica apruebe los planes relacionados con el proyecto. El DTOP espera completar los requisitos de estas leyes federales para fines de año, según el Secretario.

Si las autoridades federales aprueban la Declaración de Impacto Ambiental y el acuerdo entre el DOT y el DTOP y los documentos de preservación histórica, la Agencia Federal de Transporte Colectivo (FTA) podría emitir lo que en

inglés se conoce como el Record of Decision, que significa que se pueden comenzar a gastar las asignaciones federales, según Pesquera.

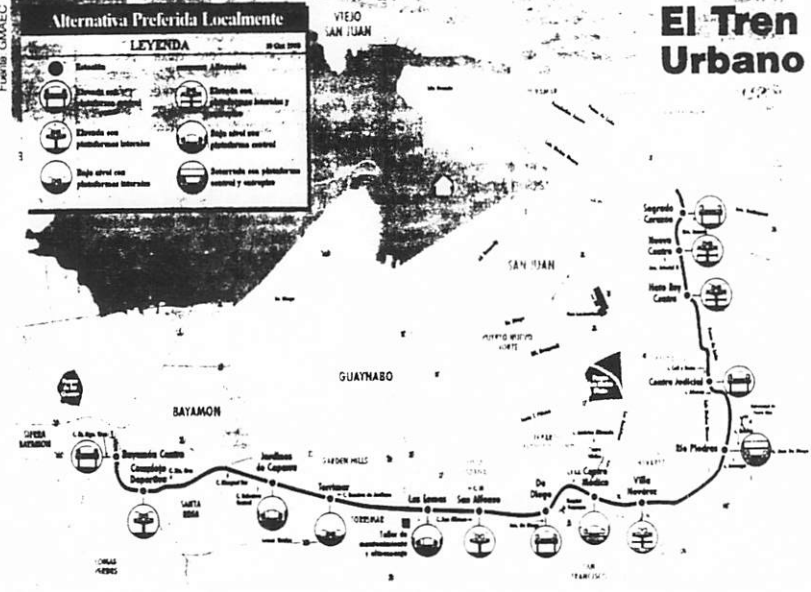
Sobre la estación de Torrimar, el Secretario indicó que algunos residentes apoyan pero otros rechazan de cualquier manera; Pesquera explicó que el DTOP desarrollará una serie de proyectos de carreteras que servirán a personas que usan la Avenida Ramirez de Arellano como una vía para llegar de sus casas a sus trabajos.

LAS OBRAS, que según Pesquera, se desarrollarán poco antes del año 2001, cuando comenzará operaciones el Tren Urbano, permitirán que el DTOP construya un bulevar en la Ramirez de Arellano con materos y otros medios que reduzcan la vía a dos carriles y obliguen a los conductores a manejar a menor velocidad, quitándole mucho de su atractivo para atajar por allí a los residentes de otros sectores.

Sobre el área de Río Piedras, donde uno de los residentes advirtió hace unas semanas en una audiencia pública que la estación subterránea entre las calles Arzuaga y Robles serviría de antro a los delincuentes que campear por el lugar en las noches, Pesquera aseguró que esta contará con iluminación y seguridad.

Igualmente, repitió que el DTOP intentará que los comercios que serán desplazados temporariamente durante la construcción vuelvan a sus edificios cuando concluya el proceso. Varios de los residentes se habían expresado preocupados con la posibilidad de que megatiendas o cadenas comerciales aprovecharán el desplazamiento para ubicar locales que obligarán al cierre de farmacias y mercados tradicionales.

SEGUN LA Declaración de Impacto Ambiental, el DTOP también accedió parcialmente a reclamos del Colegio de Arquitectos y del Recinto de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, para dejar diseñadas estaciones del tren en la avenida Domenech y frente a la UPR, aunque no se construirán en la primera fase del proyecto.



## El Tren Urbano



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The San Juan Star Tuesday, November 7, 1995

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LOCAL NEWS

# Urban Train impact labeled 'minimal'

But system would displace about 900 residents, workers

By LAURA RANDALL  
of The STAR Staff

The proposed Urban Train would have "minimal" impact on the environment and save San Juan metropolitan area commuters about 9 million hours in travel time per year, according to the long-awaited Environmental Impact Statement on the \$1.1 billion light rail system.

The report was scheduled to be released to the public today.

However, it is likely to inconvenience nearly 400 residents and more than 500 workers by displacing them from their homes and jobs.

Direct roadway expansions resulting from the train's construction would lead to the removal of 82 housing units and 52 commercial buildings along the 12-mile train route that begins in Bayamón Center and ends at Sagrado Corazón in Santurce.

A total of 388 people from areas of Jardines de Caparra, Torrimar, Río Piedras and near San Juan Judicial Center would be displaced from their homes, according to the impact statement.

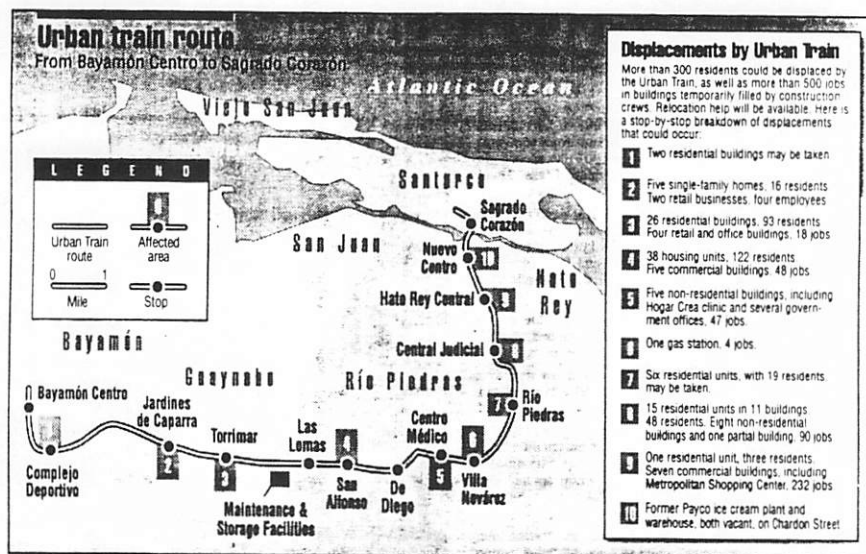
The statement also concluded that more than 500 area jobs would have to be temporarily moved due to the rail system's construction.

In Hato Rey, businesses affected include several commercial buildings and the Metropolitan Shopping Center. At the Centro Médico Station site, the Hogar CREA clinic, several government offices and a Center for Disease Control building will be taken over by construction crews.

Several retail businesses and offices will be taken from Torrimar, the Sports Complex, San Alfonso and near the Judicial Center. No residents or businesses will be displaced in the Bayamón area.

Under Federal Transportation Authority guidelines for relocation and real property acquisition, all displaced residents would be eligible for replacement housing or rental assistance of up to \$22,500. Businesses with displaced employees would be eligible for re-establishment expenses of up to \$10,000.

More than a thousand parking spaces in the busy areas of Bayamón, Medical Center, University of Puerto Rico at Río Piedras and the San Juan Judicial Center



STAR graphic by Gabriel Sosa

would also be eliminated due to construction, the impact statement found. Of those, the study estimated that 500 would be replaced once construction is completed.

The statement concluded that construction of the Urban Train's Río Piedras station will not impede UPR's plans to build in the same vicinity a 49,200-square-foot University Plaza that will feature classrooms, commercial services and housing for 2,600 students. Both are scheduled for completion in 2001.

The final environmental impact statement on the rail system was scheduled to be released to government agencies, affected municipalities and the general public today.

It was prepared by an independent consulting firm and must be approved by the Federal Transit Administration, which Transportation and Public Works Secretary Carlos Pesquera said last month he expects by December.

The transportation authority is hoping to receive about one-third of the project's funds from the federal government. Last month, House and Senate conferees

agreed to give the project \$7.5 million for engineering and design work.

The other two-thirds of the train's funding will come from transportation authority revenues and Federal Transit Administration capital funds, according to the impact statement.

Other findings of the impact statement include:

■ The 1.3 million San Juan area residents make 3.2 million trips per day, a figure that is expected to increase by 45 percent — to 4.6 million — by 2010.

■ An estimated 114,492 will use the train every day, with the largest concentration — 20 percent — from Bayamón.

■ On a systemwide basis, 55 percent of Urban Train users would arrive at the stations by *público* or bus, 40 percent would walk to the stations and about 5 percent would drive or take taxis to the stations. However, 90 percent of commuters would continue to use cars as their primary source of daily transit.

■ The Urban Train will make up 2.7 percent of the island's public transit market, while the bus system will capture 3.9 percent and the *públicos* 2.7

percent. *Público* and bus service may be expanded as a result of the new system.

■ The rail system will generate \$27.8 million in annual operating costs and employ 400 to 457 workers. Another 1,715 jobs will be created indirectly through manufacturing and service industries.

■ In 1998 and 1999, the expected peak years for the rail system's construction, the project will generate 17,100 to 18,800 jobs. This estimate is far lower than the 50,000 jobs Federal Highway Administration director Rodney Slater predicted the system would generate back in July.

According to the impact statement, the government hopes to eventually extend the rail system to Minillas, and eventually to the west to Old San Juan and to the east to Isla Verde and the Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport. An extension to Carolina is also planned during the second phase of the project.

On Nov. 22, the Transportation Department expects to announce which of six international consortium firms will be awarded the project's major construction contract.

# Family ring tops Toledo's list of expelled officers

By KARL ROSS  
of The STAR Staff

Headlining the list of police officers whose expulsion orders Superintendent Pedro Toledo signed last week are two of the Hernández Adorno brothers and a paternal uncle implicated in a Justice Department sting operation into a Colombian-led drug- and arms-trafficking ring.

The police Legal Affairs Office on Monday released the names of the eight officers including those of Carlos and Miguel Hernández Adorno, and uncle José Antonio Hernández Feliciano. A third brother serving on the Carolina

municipal police force, Carlos, was also charged in connection with the investigation, code-named "Operation Tornado."

The brothers and their uncle allegedly operated at the core of a ring of corrupt police officers assisting Colombian trafficker Antonio Depombo Cobo, who, according to prosecutors, acted as a liaison between the Cali Cocaine Cartel and local distributors, hopscotching shipments of illegal drugs and firearms along the eastern Caribbean and into Puerto Rico.

Not all of the expulsions were related to misconduct or official misconduct.

One of the reasons cited for Emilio

Flores Lozada's dismissal was "living in concubinage." The officer allegedly showed up at the doorsteps of a live-in girlfriend and forced her to turn over the keys to a brother's car, as well as jewelry. Police officials reported he returned the car several days later, but sold the jewelry at a Barrio Obrero pawn shop. They said, moreover, an arrest warrant was put out against Flores Lozada for missing child support payments.

Another officer, Luz Pérez González, was fired for allegedly defrauding U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service officials. A letter notifying her of her original suspension in August cites her for

submitting false information, taking illicit payments and immoral conduct. The letter notes that she lives in Levittown while her husband, Dominican-born Antonio De Los Santos Ruiz Castellano, lives in Santurce.

Officers belonging to the Hernández Adorno clan, meanwhile, were caught in the web of the Rosselló administration's largest probe into police corruption.

Nine active-duty officers — including a member of the elite United Rapid Action Forces — and one former officer were arrested for allegedly participating in the

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The San Juan Star - Saturday, November 18, 1995

C1

# CONSTRUCTION *Real Estate* COMMERCIAL

## Tren Urbano primed to run through 3 municipalities

(This article is part of the Final Environmental Impact Statement Executive Summary on Tren Urbano, San Juan Metropolitan Area, Puerto Rico, November 1995 by the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration and the Government of Puerto Rico Department of Transportation and Public Works Highway and Transportation Authority.

### Tren Urbano Project Corridor

The proposed Tren Urbano project corridor extends through three of the 13 municipalities that comprise the SJMA. These municipalities are Bayamon, Guaynabo, and San Juan. In this section, demographic data specific to the Tren Urbano project corridor, including existing and future land uses, is presented.

#### Existing Land Use

From west to east, and then to the north, the Tren Urbano project corridor encompasses the following 12 barrio sectors:

- Juan Sanchez/Luchetti
- Bayamon Pueblo/Bayamon Centro
- Pueblo Viejo
- Torrimar
- Monacillo Urbano
- El Cinco
- Rio Piedras
- Universidad
- Hato Rey South
- Hato Rey Central
- Hato Rey North
- Santurce

**Juan Sanchez.** The Juan Sanchez sector is located in the northern section of the Municipality of Bayamon. Major land uses in this sector include Luchetti Industrial Park in the northwest corner of the sector, and Fort Buchanan in the northeast corner. Most of the sector is owned by the U.S. Army. The sector also includes a residential area and some undeveloped land. A portion of this undeveloped land along the channelized Bayamon River is dedicated to public use.

**Bayamon Pueblo.** The Bayamon Pueblo sector consists of the town center of Bayamon. Land uses within the sector include a mix of medium-and high density residential, commercial, and public/institutional uses. Major public/institutional uses, which dominate Bayamon Pueblo, include City Hall, municipal government offices, a municipal hospital, two public terminals, a municipal sports complex, and a public housing development (Virgilio Davila).

**Pueblo Viejo.** The Pueblo Viejo sector is located within the municipality of Guaynabo and is primarily residential in character. Housing in the sector ranges from high income to a low income area known as El Polvorin, a portion of which is located on the right-of-way reserved for PR-21. Income of El Polvorin residents generally falls below the poverty line. The Tren Urbano alignment through this sector follows the right-of-way previously reserved for PR-21 in the area of the Rio Bayamon development.

**Torrimar.** Torrimar is a section of the Municipality of Guaynabo primarily comprised of closed-access moderate and high income residential neighborhoods. Smaller retail shops and mini-malls which primarily serve the surrounding developments are also located in the area, as well as a number of private schools.

**Monacillo Urbano.** The Monacillo Urbano sector is located within the boundary of the Municipality of San Juan. Existing land uses include a mix of residential and public/institutional uses. Residential developments include Las Lomas, Reparto Landrau, Altamesa, Vista Hermosa, and Reparto Metropolitano. Three medical facilities—Metropolitan Hospital, Centro Medico, and Veterans Administration (VA) Hospital—dominate the sector and serve most residents of Puerto Rico. Centro Medico, which is owned by the government, is the island's largest medical complex. A small amount of industrial activity also occurs in the sector. Tren Urbano stations in this area include Las Lomas, San Alfonso, De Diego, and Centro Medico.

**El Cinco.** The El Cinco sector is located within the

Municipality of San Juan. It is bounded on the west by PR-18 and on the east by PR-1 (Luis Munoz Rivera Avenue). A significant portion of this sector is owned by the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) and remains undeveloped. In the past, this undeveloped land supported agricultural research, and it is reserved for the long range expansion plans of the Botanical Gardens. The UPR's Agricultural Experiment Station is located within the sector, and includes a pilot run facility operated by the Agricultural Department. Residential developments are focused at Antosanti, Belisa, Villa Nevarez, and Ramon Nevarez. Commercial uses are clustered along Luis Munoz Rivera Avenue. A public cemetery is located between property owned by the UPR and PR-21.

**Rio Piedras.** The Rio Piedras sector is part of the City of San Juan. It is an important center of commercial activity and public transportation (publicos and buses). There are significant public spaces and buildings in Rio Piedras: open spaces, a fruit and produce market, several churches, a post office, public and private schools, and the UPR. Land use is typically commercial at street-level and residential on the upper floors. Buildings generally range from two to six stories. Surrounding residential areas are predominantly low to moderate income; student rooming houses are also prevalent.

**Universidad.** The Universidad sector is home to the University of Puerto Rico, the largest public university in Puerto Rico. The UPR is attended by approximately 18,000 students at the Rio Piedras campus. Supporting the UPR are public/institutional and commercial uses which dominate the sector, particularly along Luis Munoz Rivera Avenue. Student housing and other residential uses are scattered throughout the sector.

**Hato Rey South.** Hato Rey South, which is part of the broader Hato Rey sector, is located along the western side of Luis Munoz Rivera Avenue. Student residences are found in Hato Rey South, and major housing developments include University Gardens, Hyde Park, Santa Rita, and Santa Ana. Commercial uses are abundant along Luis Munoz Rivera Avenue.

**Hato Rey Central.** As its name implies, Hato Rey Central is located within the center of the broader Hato Rey sector. In general, residential uses dominate this central portion of Hato Rey and include the Baldrich, Eleanor Roosevelt, Perez Morris, Floral Park, and El

Vedado neighborhoods. However, commercial and office uses are concentrated along Luis Munoz Rivera Avenue.

**Hato Rey North.** The Hato Rey North sector is considered to be the financial and business "heart" of Puerto Rico. As a result of the preponderance of major local, national, and international banks, the sector has earned the name "Milla de Oro" (Golden Mile). Evidence of the financial focus of the sector includes the presence of such banks as Banco Popular, Chase Manhattan Bank, Bank of Boston, Santander Bank, and Royal Bank, among others. In addition, many major law firms and other businesses have located their headquarters in this sector.

Federal and state government agencies are also in abundance in the sector. For example, the Federal Office Building houses the local offices of such agencies as the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Commerce, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Soil Conservation Service. The State Administration for Compensation Due to Automotive Accidents, the Economic Development Administration, and the new Acuaexpreso Terminal are examples of the local government presence. Other government-related activities are headquartered in the sector, such as the Association of Central Government Employees and the Teachers Association, both of which occupy several buildings in the vicinity of Luis Munoz Rivera Avenue.

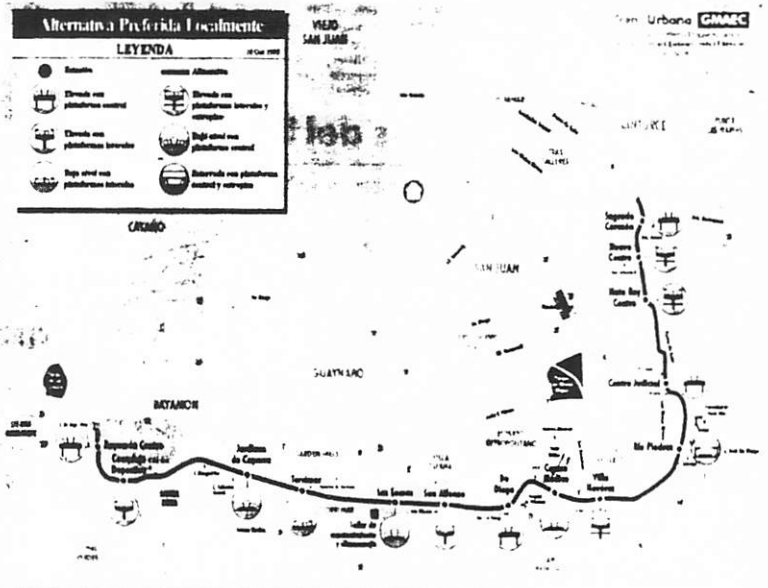
Relatively new housing developments within the sector include Parque Centro, Hato Rey Centro, and Jardines de Arena A recreational center known as Plaza Acuatica is available to residents of the sector. Light industrial uses are concentrated at the Tres Monjitas industrial park.

Two new buildings to be rented as office/commercial space have recently been constructed in the sector. As a result of this newly available space combined with space vacated by tenants who have relocated to other areas to avoid the traffic congestion in Hato Rey, vacancy rates in the sector are currently fairly high.

**Santurce.** The Santurce sector is part of the City of San Juan and is physically separated from the Hato Rey sector by the Martin Pena Channel on the south. Important institutional uses near Tren Urbano terminals include a private university, a private hospital, the YMCA, the water utility authority, and municipal offices.

Please see TREN, Page C-2

Park in the northwest corner of the...



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C2

The San Juan Star - Saturday, November 18, 1995

# CONSTRUCTION

COMMERCIAL

*State*

## PRASA builds deep ocean outfall unique to Americas

Construction of the award-winning Ponce's Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant deep ocean outfall began this month, announced the Puerto Rico Aqueduct & Sewer Authority (PRASA) recently.

The \$10 million project, to be constructed by Tampa-based Misener Marine Construction Corp., is scheduled for completion in 30 months - early 1998.

The outfall entails the installation of nearly 690 lineal meters of pipeline on land, and some 5,768 meters beyond the Ponce Bay offshore into the Caribbean Sea. The outfall diffusers will be located at a depth of an estimated 400 feet. This project also comprises the construction of an effluent pumping station with a designed capacity for 10 million gallons of water per day (MGD).

In terms of length and depth this outfall is unique worldwide," said Dr. Emilio M. Colon, PRASA's Executive Director. "It is the first of its kind to be built in the Caribbean, and the second deepest in the world."

The project won the First Prize in the Engineering Studies Category awarded by the New York Association of Consulting Engineers for engineering excellence.

This outfall was designed with every environmental concern in mind. The installation of the diffusers this deep, 400 feet, minimizes any environmental impact to the marine world both in short and long terms. This fact guarantees that once completed, the outfall will not be a hazard to this ever sensitive community.

The outfall is a model of the Nation's first Integrated Environmental Management (IEM) solution to regional wastewater disposal requirements.

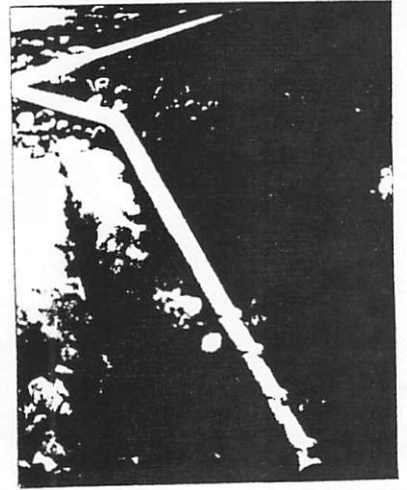
"This proves that a balance can be achieved between man's needs and nature's resources without creating unnecessary threats to the environment," added Colon.

From its design stages, the project has proven that it is both technically feasible and environmentally sound. It is being constructed in lieu of secondary treatment facilities in Ponce, yet - it is of utmost importance to emphasize that it will provide the equivalent in treatment.

Before the project's design was completed, PRASA conducted a series of complex and challenging investigations that included oceanographic, water quality, and geological soil studies, as well as the hydrodynamic and engineering areas.

In order to better understand discharge patterns in the diffusers, a Virtual Reality Program (three-dimensional computer model) was created by PRASA personnel, the local firm Vicente, Heres & Lauria, and the stateside company Malcolm Pirnie Inc. (See photo).

Another innovative step utilized in this project was hiring a team of subconsultants - all experts in their fields - to develop the very best design of the outfall, and the most convenient route. Underwater robots, micro-wave positioning systems, remote-control cameras and other state-of-the-art techniques were used throughout the investigations phases. It is precisely this kind of solid background - behind every step of the design - that ensures PRASA that every piece of the pioneering project is safe, feasible and meets both federal and local wastewater disposal requirements.



From Page C-1

### Tren

Residential land use is predominantly lower income, however, closest to the university higher income residences prevail. Street-level businesses account for 13 percent of the land use.

**Housing and Household Characteristics.** Key demographic data about households in the three municipalities through which the Tren Urbano Phase I project passes - San Juan, Guaynabo, and Bayamón - are presented in Table 32-4. To provide an indication of how the demographics of these three municipalities compare to those island-wide, summary demographics for Puerto Rico as a whole are also presented.

More than half of the families island-wide live below the poverty line. In the three municipalities of San Juan,

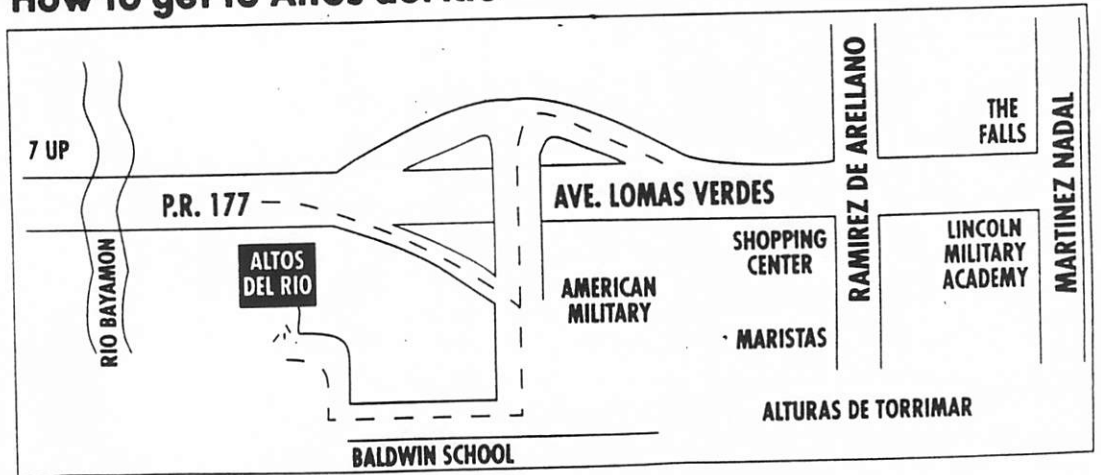
Guaynabo, and Bayamón, however, fewer families live below the poverty line, ranging from 37 to 45 percent. Almost three-quarters of families own their own homes, except in San Juan where only 57 percent of the families own their homes; this reflects the high population density in San Juan and the general availability of rental units. Sanitary housing is generally available throughout the island, with higher percentages of housing with plumbing facilities and complete kitchen facilities found in the three municipalities.

The island is fairly homogenous in terms of persons born in Puerto Rico; island-wide, only eight percent of the population was born in places other than Puerto Rico. This percentage is somewhat higher in the three municipalities, and highest in San Juan. The percentage of persons over the age of 65 is highest in San Juan, at 14 percent.

**Development Plans and Policies.** The Puerto Rico Planning Board is the agency responsible for establishing development policy on the island. Planning goals are accomplished through several mechanisms. One of these mechanisms is the zoning maps which embody the Planning Board's land use controls. Urban Expansion Plans also serve as zoning/planning tools. In the SJMA, an already urbanized area, development is primarily controlled by zoning use areas. Special zoning regulations are available to implement government redevelopment policies.

Relatively new housing developments within the sector include Parque Centro, Hato Rey Centro, and Jardines de Arena A recreational center known as Plaza Acuática is available to residents of the sector. Light industrial uses are concentrated at the Tres Monjitas industrial park.

### How to get to Altos del Rio



The San Juan Star, Saturday, November 15, 1996

LOCAL NEWS

# 4 consortiums submit bids for lead contract of Urban Train project

## Winner to supervise construction, run train for 5-10 years

By MARIA SACCHETTI  
 of The STAR Staff

Four consortiums submitted bids for a pivotal contract for the Urban Train on Wednesday and the finalists will be announced by Jan. 18. Transportation and Public Works Secretary Carlos I. Pesquera said Friday.

The government hopes to announce a winner and sign a contract in April. Pesquera said in a news conference held in the Urban Train headquarters in Rio Piedras, while traffic snarled under a slick rain outside.

Officials hope the Urban Train, a 10.6-mile light rail system planned between Bayamon and Santurce, will alleviate burgeoning traffic jams in the city.

The winner of the contract currently up for bid will have a leading role in the project, first supervising all construction and later running the train for five to 10 years.

The consortium also will start the construction hopefully in July, by building the first track, a 1.4-mile stretch between Tarrimar and Las Lomas, plus two stations, a maintenance yard and office building, which will house the Urban Train administration.

The current Urban Train headquarters on Jesus T. Piñero Avenue will be razed, probably after the year 2000, to expand the avenue, he said.

The winner will also supervise six additional contracts to build the rest of the track, and will supply all the trains

for the system.

Government committees are currently reviewing the four consortiums proposals, having decided to examine all technical documents before they even open the price estimates, he said.

Pesquera, after reviewing the committees proposals, will make the final selection.

The consortiums vying for the first contract include:

- **Constructores Tren Urbano**, led by AEG Transportation Systems, Inc. and ICF Kaiser Engineers, Inc. Local members include CMA Architects & Engineers and Las Piedras Construction Corp.

- **Grupo Tren Urbano**, led by Bombardier, Inc. of Canada with local members Fluor Daniel Inc. and Caribbean Architects & Engineers.

- **Siemens Transit Team**, led by Siemens Transportation System of New Jersey, Juan R. Requena Associates and Alternate Concepts, Inc. Local members include Redondo Construction and Guillermo, Ortiz & Associates.

- **Tren Urbano Consortium**, with SNC-Lavalin International Inc. of Montreal, and Breda Construzioni Ferroviarie. Locals include Ray Architects & Engineers and Rodriguez & Del Valle, Inc.

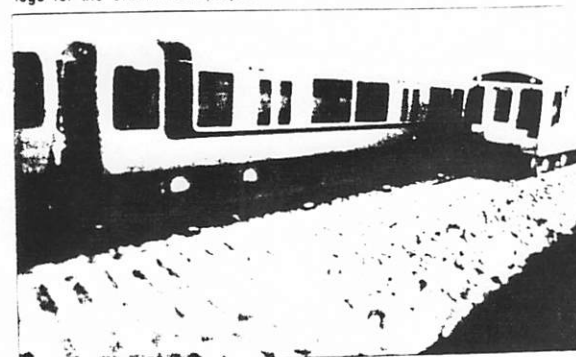
Pesquera said two of the six consortiums originally invited to submit bids dropped out: Puerto Rico Metro, which included Lebrón Associates, Atlas Railroad Construction Co., the Del Valle Group and Bird-DEI, S.E., and Raytheon Infrastructure Services-Kinkisharyo-Itochu, both U.S.-based companies.

The price tag of the initial contract remains unclear. The cost has been estimated between \$300 million and \$400 million, but Pesquera cautioned that the

Please see TRAIN, Page 8



Transportation and Public Works Secretary Carlos Pesquera presents the new logo for the Urban Train project.



Transportation officials hope to have a life-size version of this model of the Urban Train up and running in the year 2001.

# Guaynabo mayor target of lawsuits, criticism

## O'Neill maintains former mayor left town in shambles

By MARTY GERARD DELFIN  
 of The STAR Staff

Guaynabo Mayor Héctor O'Neill is trying to "fix" a lot of his predecessor's business dealings, and is finding himself the target of lawsuits, complaints and criticism.

Two petitions for his removal from office are being considered by the Municipal Complaints Commission. They were filed by present and former municipal contractors who say O'Neill acted improperly and violated the terms of their contracts.

Defending his actions, the mayor maintains that he is trying to organize his municipality's administrative affairs that were left in shambles when he took over after Alejandro "Junior" Cruz died in

1993.

He asserted in an interview with the STAR in June that Cruz didn't know how to manage his municipality. Supporting his claim is a 1993 report from the Comptroller's Office that Cruz paid millions of dollars to 30 outside contractors, consultants and advisers, without justifying how the money was spent.

One of these consultants fingered in the report was O'Neill himself, who, as mayor, announced that he paid back the municipality more than \$17,000 the Comptroller said he was overpaid when he worked for Cruz in the 1980s. O'Neill said while he disputes the Comptroller's findings, he paid the debt anyway to show good faith.

The mayor went on to file a civil lawsuit against Rep. Salomón Rondón Tolléns in July for not making arrangements to also pay back the municipality what the representative reportedly was overpaid. Rondón Tolléns was O'Neill's opponent in the New Progressive Party election for mayor to seek Cruz's replacement, and the two will face each other again in the Dec. 10 NPP primary for the

mayor's election.

This week, the Municipal Complaints Commission began hearing a case in which O'Neill stopped payments to the non-profit Guaynabo Economic Development Corp over disagreements about a 204-unit low-income housing complex it was building.

GEDECORP President Jesus Davison Lamón said O'Neill took the action without the Municipal Assembly's approval, and it has resulted in the corporation's filing for bankruptcy. Davison said he took the complaint to the commission because O'Neill's decision affects 204 low-income families.

The commission is studying whether it has jurisdiction over the case.

In another case, a former contractor, Narciso Costa Alfaro, filed a lawsuit against the municipality for charging him more than \$15,000 in construction excise taxes between 1990-92, which had been determined illegal by the Supreme Court. Costa Alfaro said he wants his money back, but O'Neill isn't budging.

Subsequently, Costa Alfaro also filed a complaint against the mayor with the

Municipal Complaints Commission charging that O'Neill owes the municipality more than he has paid.

Although the Justice Department closed the case against O'Neill after he paid the \$17,000, Costa Alfaro is using it in his defense the Comptroller's report which states that O'Neill owes more than \$80,000.

Throughout this legal bombardment, O'Neill is also being hit by a potential libelous circular that has been signed by the so-called "United Progressive Movement" of the NPP Central Committee. Guaynabo The five-page statement, entitled "Héctor O'Neill Committee of Friends," first began circulating earlier this year and resurfaced recently in time for the Dec. 10 primary.

The statement ties O'Neill to a long list of lawmakers and personalities who have been investigated for corruption. Included is a copy of the police photo taken of Héctor O'Neill Varquez, the mayor's son, when he was arrested and charged with a transit violation and marijuana possession.



# The San Juan Star

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## 4 vie for Urban Train contract

Winning firm to supervise construction, run train for 5 to 10 years. Page 3



### Sarajevo peace remains elusive

Ema Maslahat, 20, sits beside the grave of her boyfriend Amer Bajic in Sarajevo on Friday. The Bosnian government soldier was killed in a battle in October. Bosnian Serb leaders, meanwhile, tried to persuade local Serbs in Sarajevo to lay down their arms and accept the U.S.-brokered peace plan that obliges them to cede control of their territory. They faced a tough audience.

Page 14

AP PhotoStream

### Residents of Corozal resigned to water woes

ASA has already spent \$500,000 for improvements and plans to invest another \$4 million on Cibuco facility. Page 2

### PORTFOLIO

#### Boo-la, boo-la: Yale, Harvard alumni face off

Grads gather in Hato Rey to see "The Game," the annual football contest between the Ivy League rivals. Page 15

### BUSINESS

#### U.S. budget deficit in October drops 27.4% from year earlier

Spending rose on Social Security and Medicare, but fell on military and agricultural programs. Page B21

#### Retailers elated; cash registers ring

Local merchants say sales were 5 to 10 percent higher on Friday as Yule shopping season kicks off. Page B21

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LOCAL NEWS

From Page 3  
**Train**

amount could change dur-

ing negotiations.  
"We won't know the cost until much later," he said.  
The overall cost of the train is estimated at more than \$1 billion, one third of which officials hope will be

federally funded. The rest will be split between the commonwealth and the private sector, he said.  
So far, however, Congress has provided only \$27.5 million, including \$10 million in federal fiscal year 1995 and \$17.5 million slated for fiscal year 1996, which began Oct. 1.

Officials hope the trains will be running by the year 2001.

**2 anti-radar groups seek government documents**

The Associated Press

Two groups opposing the installation of a U.S. Navy radar have filed a motion in San Juan Superior Court to obtain government documents on the project.

The United Front for the Defense of the Valley of Lajas, where the Navy wants to place the radar's receiver system, and the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques, where the transmitter would be built, claimed the government has ignored their requests for information on the device.

"This information is of vital impor-

ance in order to be able to discuss the project in a public hearing, and we have requested it numerous times over the few months," a release said.

Public hearings on the radar issue will take place Monday in Lajas and Wednesday in Vieques.

The \$9 million Relocatable-Over-The-Horizon Radar (ROTHR) would track low-flying aircraft and boats carrying drug shipments from Colombia, Peru and Brazil, areas not covered by similar devices in Texas and Virginia. It would consist of a huge transmitter and receiver separated by at least 50 miles.

**Rodriguez files 2 bills to promote low-income housing for elderly**

By the STAR Staff

Citing a lack of low-cost housing for the elderly, Sen. Charlie Rodriguez announced Friday he has filed two bills to promote the creation of elderly housing.

Senate Bill 1273 would provide sweeping tax breaks for people who create housing to sell or lease to the elderly after the bill is passed into law. Government coffers won't suffer because "nobody is building elderly housing," he said.

People who build elderly housing would not pay tax on the construction or sale of the units, which cannot cost more than \$60,000. They also would not pay municipal taxes.

The unit must be occupied for 15 years by people aged 60 years or older.

Land owners who renovate buildings to lease them to elderly tenants would be eligible for the benefits.

Senate Bill 1274 would help the elderly actually buy homes by providing mortgage subsidies of up to \$200 a month from an \$18 million fund.

Rodriguez said he found the money in an unused contingency fund established to preserve the "traditional" lottery system when the electronic lottery began in 1989. Both lotteries have flourished and the fund was never used, he said.

The 1990 Census registered 465,735 people aged 60 and older in Puerto Rico, or some 13.2 percent of the island population. More than half — 56 percent — lived below the poverty level. The average income was \$5,477 a year in 1990.

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All Members of the  
**American Red Cross Puerto Rico Region Blood Services**  
are hereby requested to participate  
in the work session for its  
**5th Annual Meeting**  
to be held on Tuesday, December 5, 1995  
at the St. Moritz Restaurant, Condado, P.R. at 7:30 am



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LOCAL NEWS

# Urban train jeopardizes old shopping center

## Alternatives rejected as too expensive, unfeasible

By LAURA RANDALL

Estrella Mercader doesn't know how much the proposed Urban Train will cost. She isn't sure where it will end or when it will begin.

What the elderly Hato Rey resident does know is that Metropolitan Restaurant serves good chicken and rice. Cheap.

"You can't get it for this price anywhere else," she insisted at the elbow-to-elbow counter.

Residents of surrounding neighborhoods off Luiz Muñoz Rivera and Roosevelt Avenues are hoping the family-style diner — along with the pharmacy, supermarket and other stores that make up the Metropolitan Shopping Center — won't be a casualty of the \$1.1 billion rail system proposed by the Department of Transportation and Public Works.

The need to detour the Urban Train's Hato Rey Central station away from Muñoz Rivera Avenue because of pipeline barriers and anticipated traffic congestion, however, has placed the island's oldest shopping center in jeopardy.

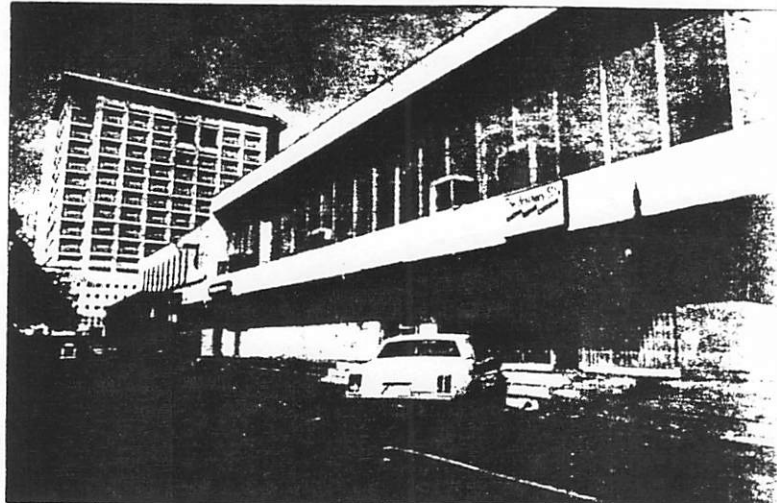
Transportation Department officials say they won't know for several months whether that means a complete shutdown of the center or a "temporary displacement" of its services to nearby not-yet-determined locations.

Residents of nearby Huyke urbanization, who have met with Transportation Department Secretary Carlos I. Pesquera three times regarding the center's status, say they were led to believe that only the back of the shopping center and part of the parking lot would be lost to the Urban Train.

But the last meeting, held in a resident's home on Nov. 13, was "very frustrating," said Huyke resident Ida Iris González Bradley, when their suggested alternatives were rejected as too expensive or not feasible.

Pesquera called the shopping center one of the transportation authority's "center of attentions" and said the center will only close if no other alternatives are found. "That would be the extreme case," he said during an interview at Urban Train headquarters Friday.

More likely, Pesquera said, the year-long construction will be staged so "critical services continue to be



STAR photo by Ingrid Torres

The picture shows the backside of the Metropolitan Shopping Center, in Hato Rey. The proposed Metropolitan Urban Train would pass directly behind the shopping center, which may be closed down at least during construction.

provided." The pharmacy and supermarket, for example, could be moved to temporary quarters next door and then resume operations at their old location when construction was completed, he said.

One alternative, having the elevated platform cut through Gandara Park behind the shopping center, was discarded because of U.S. Department of Transportation regulations on unnecessary impacts to recreational areas, Pesquera said.

If the center is destroyed, Pesquera said a new shopping center may be erected in its place after construction is complete.

The transportation authority plans to begin building the rail system, which begins in Bayamón and ends at Sagrado Corazón in Santurce, in 1997 and open for business in 2010. The final environmental impact statement on the rail system was released to the public last month. Comments on the statement are due by Dec. 6 and Pesquera expects approval by the Federal Transit Administration by Dec. 15.

Pesquera said the exact fate of the Metropolitan Shopping Center won't be known for about another six months, when the cost-effectiveness of all options is evaluated.

Some patrons and shopkeepers remain skeptical, however, of the transportation authority's plans for the center.

"You know what they mean when they say they'll build

a new shopping center. It means a hundred years from now," said Hato Rey resident Gerardo Maldonado.

Building officials have not met formally with shopkeepers because they are unsure themselves of the center's future, said Assistant Administrator Eugenio Fernández Comas.

"The degree of impact is still unknown. We are working directly with the secretary to see what will happen," Fernández said. He said he didn't know whether the transportation authority will purchase part or all of the shopping center.

But the environmental impact statement clearly states the transportation authority's plans for the shopping center. "At the Metropolitan Shopping Center site, due to the extent of the physical impacts to the shopping center structure itself, the Puerto Rico Highway and Transportation Authority intends to acquire this entire site."

Besides the Metropolitan Restaurant, the shopping center houses Woolworth's, El Amal Pharmacy, Grand Supermarket, Computerland, a beauty salon and a liquidator's store. Business offices make up the second floor.

Many elderly residents walk to the center from the homes in Huyke, El Vedado and Floral Park, said Ida Iris González.

"The population affected by the possible closing is huge," she said. "Some of us have been using the center for close to 50 years."

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13, was "very frustrating" comment

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**About The San Juan Star**

The San Juan Star is published daily at 5 Acacia St., Monterrey Industrial Urbanization, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00920-1511. Our mailing address is P.O. Box 364187, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 00936-4187.

Second Class Postage paid at San Juan, Puerto Rico. (0040) U.S.P.S. 480-420

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Cuatro propuestas para el primer segmento del Tren Urbano

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VEA LA PAGINA 75

# Amenaza a la paz la rebeldía serbia

Rechazan vivir en 'territorio enemigo' los responsables serbios de Sarajevo



El líder de los serbobosnios, Radovan Karadzic, emprende en Pale, uno de los baluartes de sus tropas en Bosnia, la delicada misión de convencer a los rebeldes serbios para que acepten el acuerdo de paz.