PRESENTATION OF BOMBARDIER TECHNOLOGY IN NORTH AMERICA

Vancouver to test Brussels' low-floor trams

Right on time for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in Vancouver, the city is teaming up with Brussels Public Transport and railway technology firm Bombardier Transportation for a demonstration of low-floor trams in public transit.

Bombardier Transportation and Brussels Public Transport Company STIB (Société des Transports Intercommunaux de Bruxelles) are teaming up with the City of Vancouver (British Columbia, Canada) to give North America a taste of European light rail technology. The partners are preparing for a unique streetcar demonstration project that will help the city provide public transit service during the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. Alain Flausch, Chief Executive Officer of STIB, commented: "We are very pleased to contribute to this initiative with our beautifully-designed, award-winning Bombardier Flexity trams. It allows us to share with both residents of Vancouver and visitors to the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games our enthusiasm about the high level of comfort, style and performance the riders of our Brussels' Public Transport service enjoy every day." STIB and Bombardier are collaborating with Vancouver to ship two of STIB's 100 percent low-floor Flexity trams to North America by sea in late 2009. In Vancouver, the vehicles will operate seven days a week between January 21 and March 21, 2010 on an existing track being upgraded to accommodate a demonstration line near Vancouver's Olympic and Paralympic Village. The line will be operated and maintained by Bombardier. "European cities have enjoyed the benefits of modern streetcars for decades," said Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson. "Green transportation options – including streetcars – need to be part of our urban transportation solutions in Vancouver. We're delighted to be working with Bombardier and Brussels on this exciting streetcar demonstration project."

During the 2010 Winter Olympics, the city of Vancouver plans to test low-floor trams from Brussels. *Photo: Bombardier*

A streetcar renaissance in North America

For Bombardier, the Vancouver project complements an ongoing commitment to introduce 100 percent light rail low-floor technology to new markets. North America is a good example where increasing urbanization and congestion have many cities considering modern streetcar or tram technology as an important component in planning sustainable transportation. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, streetcars were an important part of urban public transit in both Canada and the United States. Ridership and presence declined in following years with the emergence of automobiles and population migration to the suburbs. Eventually, most streetcar systems were shut down and dismantled. But population growth in North American urban centres has been increasing over the past decade, and many cities are once again focusing on modern streetcar technology as an attractive transit solution. A recent example is the City of Toronto, which in May 2009 identified Bombardier as preferred bidder for North America's largest light rail vehicle procurement ever encompassing 204 new 100 percent low-floor streetcars to replace the city's ageing fleet. Bombardier's technology proposal for Toronto is based on the Flexity 100 percent low-floor technology platform operating with STIB in Brussels.

The Flexity solution in Brussels

STIB's 68 Flexity vehicles operate on significant parts of the Brussels 533-km public transport network that serves more than 286 million riders each year. To further enhance its network, STIB commissioned an additional 102 bi-directional Flexity trams, including a firm order for 87 vehicles in January 2008. The new Flexity vehicles support the city's efforts to curb traffic congestion and reduce CO_2 emissions. The Brussels Flexity tram received the prestigious "Henry Van de Velde label" (2007) for its contemporary interpretation of the Art Nouveau style and a "Design at Work" Award (2008) for innovative product development and outstanding design qualities. Currently, more than 450 100 percent low-floor Flexity vehicles are in successful revenue service in Brussels (Belgium), Linz and Innsbruck (Austria), Geneva (Switzerland) and Marseille (France), and will soon be put into operation in Palermo (Italy), Augsburg and Krefeld (Germany).