

[Metro.net](#) (web)

## Resources

► [Safety](#)

► [Pressroom](#) (web)

► [Ask the CEO](#)

► [CEO Forum](#)

► [Employee Recognition](#)

► [Employee Activities](#)

► [Metro Projects](#)

► [Facts at a Glance](#)  
(web)

► [Archives](#)

► [Events Calendar](#)

► [Research Center/Library](#)

► [Metro Classifieds](#)

► [Bazaar](#)

## Metro Info

► [30/10 Initiative](#)

► [Policies](#)

► [Training](#)

► [Help Desk](#)

► [Intranet Policy](#)

## Need e-Help?

Call the Help Desk  
at 2-4357

[Contact myMetro.net](#)



Sergio Renteria, mechanic "A" and Mustafa Bey, mechanic "B" replace connectors for transmission diagnosis as part of the Re-Power process.

## Mid-life/Re-power Program Reconditions Buses to Extend Life

- The multi-million project at Central Maintenance replaces major portions of the coaches – including the engine and transmission

By JIMMY STROUP

(July 9, 2008) If you had driven your vehicle 300,000 miles, you might consider trading it in for some new, flashy replacement.

Unfortunately for Metro, trading in a 40,000 pound bus for the latest model isn't an option. To compensate for the lack of local bus dealerships with sweet trade-in deals, Metro has figured a way to make new buses out of old ones.

The Mid-life/Re-power program does just what the name implies. At a bus' mid-life point (around 350,000 miles – roughly six to nine years of service, depending on the area of service), the coach is shipped to Central Maintenance for a 60-day rehabilitation—a health spa for aging buses.

"We take the whole bus and refurbish it," said Bruce Ramsey, Repair and Refurbish equipment maintenance supervisor, who oversees one segment of the process. "They come in looking old and go out looking new. It's almost like a whole new bus."

The 6300 Neoplan series buses have already been through the process, as have some of the 6700 Neoplan series. Central Maintenance has completed 168 of 225 of the New Flyer Hi-Floor 5000 series and. The New Flyer 5300

series is waiting in the on-deck circle.

The process begins when a bus is repainted at Central Maintenance's massive paint shop. The body is un-dented, if needed, and given a new veneer to match the agency's current style guidelines. Local line buses come in with the older-style white bodies and leave in brilliant poppy.

Each coach receives two gallons of poppy paint (red on Rapid), a gallon of silver, a gallon of clear coat and a final gallon of sealer to protect the paint from the elements.



Jonathan Jackson, mechanic "A" adjusts a coolant line before installing.

The windows are replaced at this stage, as are the plastic shields that help defend against vandalism. The trouble spots for vandalism on the bus' interior are now being painted with a tough material, much like the bed lining for a truck, making it easier to scrub away graffiti. The seats are also removed and replaced.

"The chairs are usually just thrown away," Ramsey said. "Believe it or not, it's usually cheaper for us just to replace the whole [seat]."

### **Mid-life**

After the body's "cherried out," as the mechanics say, the buses move to the mid-life portion of the program. Here, a huge portion of the coach's inner and outer workings are replaced or rebuilt.

"For each bus, there's a list of things that will be replaced no matter what, which we call '100 percent' items," Ramsey said. "Stores will send us down a kit with the 100 percent items in it.

"As we tear it apart, we'll notice things that need to get replaced, too, and we'll take care of that as needed," he said.

Though the inventory of replaced parts is long, a short list includes brakes, wheelchair lift assembly, CNG fuel tanks and wheel covers—even the windshield wipers.

On the 5000 series, Ramsey said they've been noticing the same kind of

quirky problems on almost every bus: the rear differentials (the axles) are all slightly cracked.

"The original differentials are all coming in cracked and we have to weld them to repair," he said. "You can't even buy some of this stuff – it's obsolete – so we have to figure out ways to make it work.

"We tried to order some of what we needed to repair some of these problems and it took nine months to get. Most of the time it's faster and more cost-effective to do it ourselves," he said.

---

[Continued in Part II](#): Performing the human equivalent of heart surgery, Central Maintenance replaces engines and innovates to make them fit.