

# PUSHING PODS

*To combat future traffic woes, Fountain Valley man sees elevated cars as solution.*

By SUSAN J. PARK THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

**FOUNTAIN VALLEY** Roy Reynolds says he has the solution to Fountain Valley's traffic problems. He wants Orange County to adopt what he calls Personal Rapid Transit, a system of small, light cars that transport people on an elevated rail system.

The Fountain Valley resident created his company, PRT Strategies, two years ago to propel the idea.

**Q: What is PRT? A:** The idea behind the system is that it's personal rapid transit ... meaning you walk up to a station, you do a card swipe and tell it where you want to go.

The car, the ride is yours alone. You're not sharing with anyone else. If you're traveling with a companion or a child, that's fine, or a wheelchair.

Unlike light rail, unlike a bus, this is a private, unshared ride. In order for the system to be successful, we have to max the calculated load by putting enough of these vehicles on the track.

We argue that we can take you there at about 35 miles per hour.

**Q: Why do we need it? A:** Traffic is going to increase 39 percent by 2030. ... We're not going to be able to accommodate a 30 percent growth in traffic.

If people wanted to ride the buses, they would, but we're a middle-class, car-oriented society.

**Q: Why is your public transit system better?**

**A:** It's much, much cheaper. For example, comparing this to the CenterLine, it's about one-sixth the cost. It's \$15 million to \$20 million a mile versus the CenterLine, which was \$130 million a mile.

**Q: Why is it cheaper? A:** It's a much lighter-weight system. To elevate a small car, these vehicles only carry two or three people. And you want to elevate it because it's not having to contend with surface traffic stoplights ... These vehicles maybe run 1,000 pounds (each).

**Q: It seems counterintuitive to have more cars that cost less overall.**

**A:** Vehicles are estimated at \$60,000 for one. That's including the computer, propulsion system and so forth. The track way itself runs about \$5 million to \$7 million a mile.

The vehicles are much smaller and lighter-weight than the bigger street car. Most of the cost is in the track and the right of way to acquire the track.

Our right-of-way costs are either non-existent or very low because of (the track way) being elevated. It's about 15 feet up to the track way.

**Q: How would this be set up? A:** The most effective way to place this would be complementary locations to the bus system. If, for example, a bus wasn't running along Talbert Avenue, that would be a good place to put a PRT line. Sooner or later, we're going to be exchanging passengers with the bus line.

Alternatives that the OCTA can use is to install this system where the buses (and light rail) can't run. They can't run along the Santa Ana River. This can go along the Santa Ana River.

**Q: How's the response from cities?**

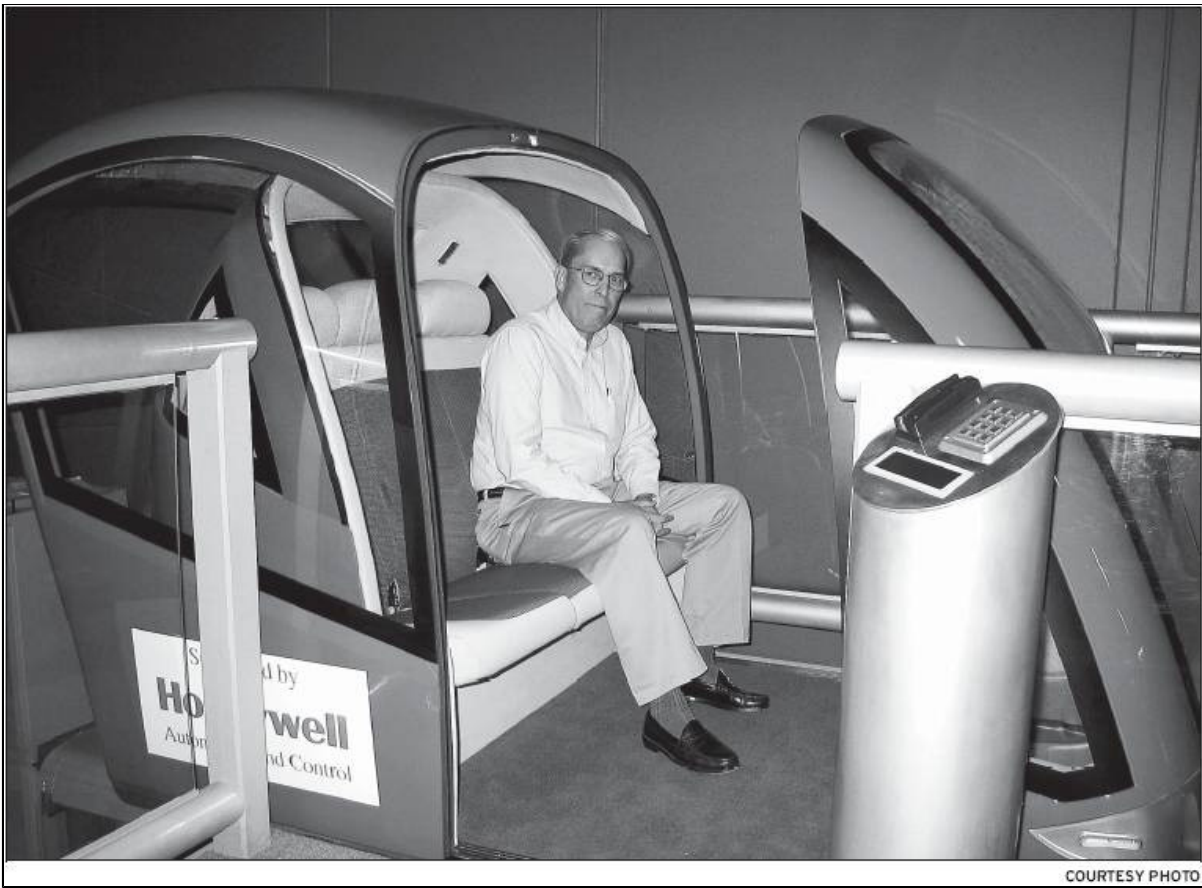
**A:** Tepid. They're risk-averse because there's no operational system that they can see.

## Meet Roy Reynolds

**Born:** Oak Park, Ill. **Age:** 58 **Career:** Spent 30 years in the computer business and retired as the chief information officer of Emulex. **Pets:** A beagle named Daisy and a cairn terrier named Ernie **Fun fact:** Loved transportation systems since his father gave him an American Flyer model train when he was 6.

**CONTACT THE WRITER:**

714-445-6604 or [spark8@ocregister.com](mailto:spark8@ocregister.com)



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**TRAILBLAZER:** Roy Reynolds says personal, pod-like cars that run on an elevated track are the transit system of the future.