AND NOW...

THE RTS

GMC is introducing the first completely new production transit bus design since 1959.

PHOTOS COURTESY GMC TRUCK & COACH DIVISION

After almost twenty years, a totally new concept in transit bus design is being introduced by General Motors. Called the "RTS," for Rapid Transit Series, the bus will seat 47 riders and be built at the GMC Truck and Coach facilities in Pontiac, Mich.

Nearly $50 million has been allocated by GM for facilities, equipment and tooling to produce the bus.

Probably the most innovative aspect of the RTS is the modular construction used on the body. In a completely new manufacturing process, the 40-foot RTS body will be formed by welding together eight separate five-foot-long modules (see illustration).

Newly designed automatic and manual welding installations, most with computerized controls for quality assurance, will be utilized for module fabrication and body assembly. Where today's present GM bus needs more than 9,000 rivets for each bus, this new system will be reduced to about 1,400 with the new RTS welding process. Not only will this provide a smooth exterior appearance and facilitate maintenance and repairs, but it will also diminish in plant riveting noise, a welcome change for the workers.

With a completely new and modern look, the bus will also feature a "kneeling" system which lowers the side of the RTS about five inches at the front entrance and three inches at the rear door for easier passenger boarding and exit.

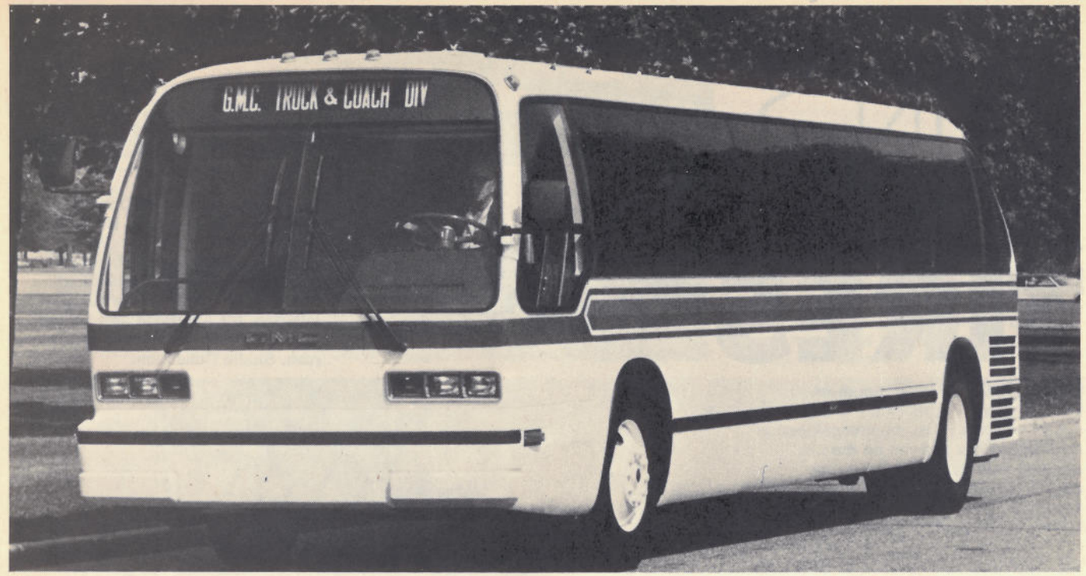
Other features include a new independent front suspension and automatic transmission, automatically controlled air-conditioning and heating, new electrical systems designed for greater durability and easier maintenance, expansive window areas, improved sound and heat insulation, soft fluorescent interior lighting, and new seat designs.

The RTS makes extensive use of a durable, corrosion-resistant new stainless steel alloy which was initially developed for GM automobile and light truck catalytic converters; acrylic windows which resist impact up to ten times better than conventional safety glass; and fiberglass body panels which are extremely resistant to damage.

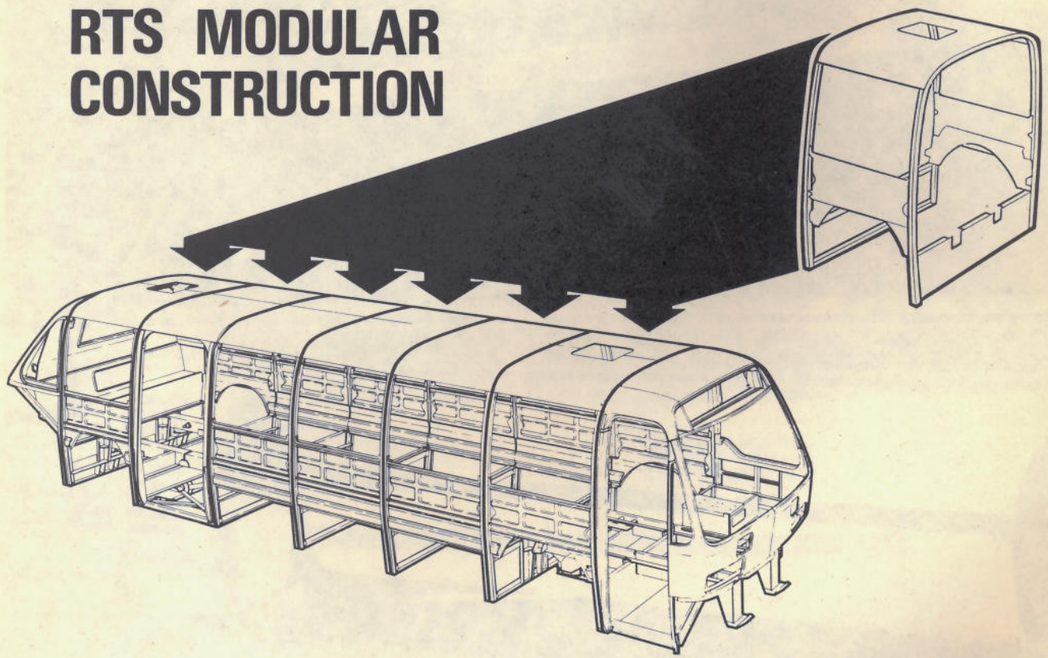
In the continuing battle against vandals who plague many of the nation's bus operators, newly developed fabrication and assembly equipment and processes permit wide use of the corrosion and damage resistant new steel and fiberglass in critical RTS areas.

The high resiliency of the fiberglass panels resists damage better than the conventional steel and aluminum used on the current bus. In addition,

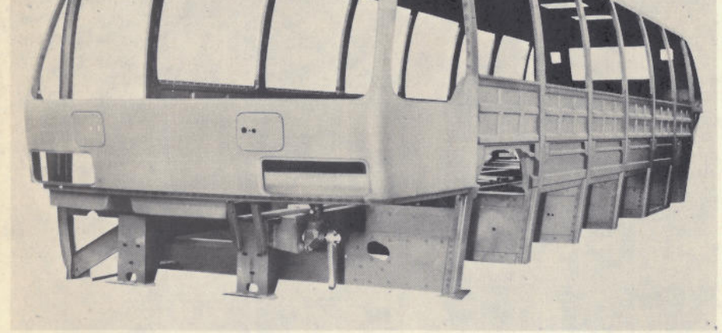
The new RTS with its sleek and clean lines contrasts dramatically with the current GMC transit coach which has been in production since 1959.



RTS MODULAR CONSTRUCTION



Six 5-foot-long modules are used to form the center section of the 40-foot-long transit bus body. Separate front and rear modules complete the assembly.



An extremely durable and corrosion resistant stainless steel alloy is used extensively for the inner and outer structure of the new RTS bus.

The new bus interior features wall-mounted, cantilevered seats for passenger comfort, and an unobstructed floor space to help in cleanup operations. Soft fluorescent lighting will make the interiors more inviting for travelers.

grafitti is relatively easy to remove from the acrylic-coated fiberglass lower body panels, a frequent vandal target.

Other RTS features that provide greater economies in maintenance and repair include a 40 percent reduction in the variety of parts and a much larger range of parts interchangeability. Body panels can be replaced in minutes, as compared to hours for the older style bus. And finally, a greatly expanded corrosion protection and durability through extensive use of the new steel alloy and fiberglass.

Production of the RTS is due to commence in the fall of 1976 and fleets of the sleek new units should begin appearing on the nation's transit systems in the very near future. They'll be interesting to watch. ☆