Commuter Interview:

As a man of limited means, Francis does not always take public transportation to get from point A to point B. This being said, he has taken the bus often enough to have become quite familiar with its various facets. Throughout his life of approximately 55 to 65 years, he has come to prefer taking the bus over taking the subway or regional rail trains for numerous reasons. Firstly, the cost to travel is much cheaper than that of regional rail. He can purchase the tickets necessary for both his trip and his return for less than a one-way pass on the train. Secondly, the buses offer more variance to the average commuter. By this, he means that they are less one-directional than their rail-bound counterparts. Lastly, traveling by bus allows for better sightseeing opportunities as they are continuously above-ground. Instead of looking out the window into the darkness and the occasional passing train, Francis is able to observe pedestrians, traffic patterns, and the everyday occurrences of life in the city.

In terms of the bus shelter to which he stood closely, Francis enjoyed the presence of the simple construction. He would much rather stand beneath its cover than in the open, exposed to more elements. If anything, he wishes they were built larger to accommodate additional commuters. Additionally, he would not mind if they were cleaned up every once and a while. Small litter builds up and often blows out onto the street. Graffiti can get in the way of looking out through the glass and into the street. While the advertisements displayed in and around the shelter offer Francis no incentive to shop, they serve another purpose. They help to make the city look better, more interesting and colorful. Within the walls of the shelters, he has never felt unsafe.

As mentioned previously, Francis’ status as a lower income-earner does not allow him the convenience of taking the bus whenever he wants. When he has funds to spare, he uses them to change the scenery around him, via the bus. Contrary to the common commuter, to Francis, the bus serves not as a part of an average day but as an occasional treat granting him the freedom to explore the city in which he operates. The fact that he cannot take this “trip” as often as he wishes makes the entire transit experience much more important in his life. One may conclude that the bus helps him to escape the trials of his everyday life, at least for a short while.