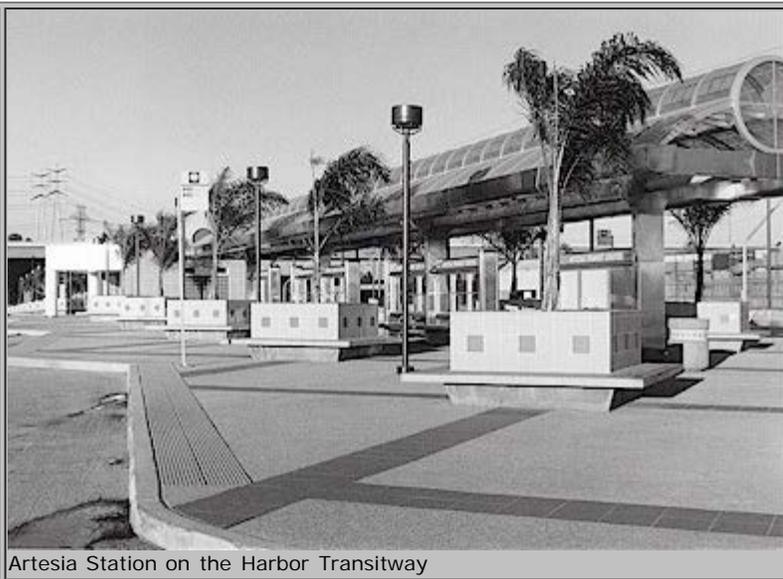


Plan to Increase Harbor Transitway Use Includes More Service, Reduced Fares



Artesia Station on the Harbor Transitway

(July 5) The MTA wants to greatly expand Metro Bus ridership on the under-utilized Harbor Transitway by offering all-day service and reduced fares as incentives to attract new riders and to encourage some rail passengers to switch to the bus. The Board will be asked at its July 27 meeting to approve a six-month demonstration of the revised service.

A plan devised by Countywide Planning would have the upgraded service starting Sept. 5 in conjunction with the opening of Transitway stations at Carson Street and Pacific Coast Highway, the southernmost of eight bus stations on the freeway.

Line 445, which currently operates three northbound morning runs and four southbound evening runs, would be expanded to provide some 18,000 new service hours by operating every 30 minutes during peak periods and every hour during off-peak periods, evenings and weekends. Service would be offered from approximately 5 a.m. until 10 p.m. each day.

Council offers marketing help

"This is a step in the right direction," says Rod Goldman, the transportation planning manager working on the project. "We'll be working with the South Bay Council of Governments to encourage ridership. They've offered their help with targeted marketing in local newspapers."

If approved by the Board, fares for passengers traveling between downtown and the Harbor Transitway station at the I-105 would be reduced by \$1 from the current \$2.35 to \$1.35. Those boarding at either Carson Street or PCH for downtown would pay \$1.85 instead of \$3.35 - a \$1.50 savings. Travel between San Pedro and downtown would be reduced by \$1 from \$3.35 to \$2.35, reflecting a reduction from four freeway zones to two.

Fare reductions would apply not only to Line 445, but also to lines 442, 444, 446, 447 and Line 550, created in 1998 to provide service to area hospitals. The MTA presently serves about 2,500 daily Transitway riders

Provide incentives to riders

One anticipated effect of reducing fares - in addition to encouraging new ridership - would be to relieve pressure on the overcrowded Metro Blue Line by providing an incentive for many Metro Green Line riders to use Harbor Transitway buses for direct downtown service.

A patron who commutes into downtown LA via the Metro Green Line and

Metro Blue Line pays only \$1.60. Under the proposal, a Metro Green Line patron would pay \$1.60 - instead of the current \$2.60 - to complete his or her trip into downtown on a Transitway bus.

The cost of operating the proposed service is estimated to be \$1.26 million. Loss of revenue from eliminating two express increments is estimated at \$488,000, although that is expected to be offset by a gain of \$225,000 in revenue from new riders attracted to the expanded Transitway service.

Board concerned about ridership

"We had expected this and put money in the MTA budget for upgraded service," says Goldman. He noted that the Board has been concerned about low ridership on the Transitway.

The MTA will monitor Harbor Transitway service during the demonstration project to determine whether it meets at least 50 percent of the minimum standard for boardings per revenue hour for express services.

The Harbor Transitway, built by Caltrans, was completed in August, 1996. It runs along the median of the Harbor Freeway between Artesia Boulevard in Gardena north to Adams Boulevard in Los Angeles. At present, Metro Bus Line 445 and LADOT Line 448 are the only express lines operating on the Transitway. Expanding service was a key recommendation of the MTA's South Bay/Gateway Transit Restructuring Study.

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