

MARKETING PLAN
SANTA MONICA FREEWAY
PREFERENTIAL LANES PROJECT

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Introduction

The Santa Monica freeway preferential lanes project is a first in national transit history, involving agencies on a federal, state, and local level. Planning and Operational "Partners" in this joint experiment are the Urban Mass Transit Authority (UMTA), the State of California Department of Transportation (CalTrans), Santa Monica Municipal Bus lines (SMMBL), the Southern California Rapid Transit District (RTD), and the California Highway Patrol (CHP). The cities of Santa Monica and Los Angeles, and certain communities along the route of the freeway, are, in a sense, "silent" partners by virtue of their direct albeit unofficial involvement.

Because of its uniqueness and the extent of its impact on commuters using this freeway, the project will be a difficult one requiring a thorough marketing effort, particularly in the advance and beginning stages of operation when a significant adverse public reaction can be expected. The plan presented here is an outline which may be followed by District personnel and teams from all agencies actively involved. It is designed to enhance both the operational success of the project and its acceptance by the public. The service test of the project itself will offer the marketing forces the opportunity to

evaluate their program and revise or duplicate activities as needed in the promotion of similar projects on other freeways in the future.

Project Elements

The Santa Monica freeway preferential lanes project includes the appropriation of the existing left traffic lane in each direction on the Santa Monica Freeway between Lincoln Blvd. (Santa Monica) and the Harbor Freeway (Los Angeles), a distance of 12.5 miles, for use by buses and car-pools (three persons or more per automobile) only. The vast majority of trips made on the preferential lanes will originate in an area bounded by the Santa Monica mountains on the north, La Cienega Boulevard on the east, the Pacific Ocean on the west and El Segundo on the south.

The conceptual plan for providing bus service involves a total of more than 50 buses to be operated by the Southern California Rapid Transit District and eight by Santa Monica Municipal Bus Lines. These buses will make scheduled runs in each direction (eastbound in the morning peak hours and westbound in the evening peak hours), 24 hours-a-day, seven days a week. Three new RTD Park/Ride facilities will be in operation at the Centinela Drive-In, Culver City, the Douglas Lot at Ocean Park and Centinela in Santa Monica, and a third to be located at Ashland and Nielson Way in Santa Monica. We are still negotiating the acquisition of another Park-N-Ride lot in the Westwood/Century City area. Promotion of these lots will be expanded to include their use as car and collection centers.

It is proposed to improve traffic flow through use-control of certain on-ramps -- some to all traffic, and some to be open to buses and car pools only. Caltrans estimates that the recommended ramp controls will divert approximately 1,500 vehicles from the freeway to surface streets, namely Pico, Olympic Venice, Washington and Adams Boulevards. The traffic diversion will create traffic conditions on the non-priority lanes similar to the level now existing.

Implementation date for the program has been set for September 29, 1975.

The entire project is an experimental program to be conducted for a minimum of 12 months. There are three major areas of concern on which the experiment will provide valuable information: mode shift from low-occupancy automobiles to public transit and car pools; public acceptance of this type of preferential treatment; and the impact of this treatment on traffic safety. It is these areas which the marketing effort must concentrate to achieve maximum effectiveness.

In addition to the new lines and extension, other improvements beneficial to the public are:

- a. Greater commuter access to the Los Angeles
Central Business District (CBD)

- b. Improved mobility in the Santa Monica Freeway corridor.
- c. Shift from low-occupancy automobiles to car pools and public transit.
- d. Improved bus departure time schedules during peak rush hours.
- e. Efficient use of energy due to reduction in vehicle miles traveled.
- f. Improvement in air quality standards, closer to those set for the region by the Environmental Protection Agency.
- g. Increase in the person-carrying capacity of an existing freeway without increasing its size, thereby reducing the need for more freeway construction.

Marketing Objectives

The objectives of the marketing program, which parallel the major objectives of the freeway project itself, are: To induce public acceptance of an improved means of mass transportation that involves giving up one freeway lane for the exclusive use of buses and car pools; to enhance the chances of success of the experiment through maximum public information and education; and to increase general bus patronage by promoting new and improved services in the test area.

Marketing Objectives (Continued)

(The latter objective, from CalTrans' orientation, is broadened to include increase in the use of car pools, vans, tour or limousine vehicles.)

Target Audiences and Profile

The Westside area is composed generally of high-grade residential development with some commercial and industrial activity, and a population of approximately one-half million persons, of whom about 12,400 make daily work trips to the Los Angeles CBD. It is anticipated that the freeway lanes will primarily serve the people making these work trips during the rush hours to commercial concentrations within and adjacent to the CBD, and back. Target groups for marketing purposes, therefore are:

1. Westside residents (within a reasonable distance of RTD or SMMBL bus service or Park and Ride lots) who travel to the CBD, whether present bus users, nonusers, automobile drivers or riders (singly or already in pools).

2. Commuters to the Westside who may reside in or near the CBD or who live in the eastern sections of the city and must travel through the CBD.

3. Shoppers, senior citizens, or other tour or airport travel groups who could use the service during off-peak hours in either direction.

Marketing Strategy

Because of the uniqueness and complexity of the Santa Monica freeway project, the extreme degree of change it will require and cause in the driving patterns of automobile commuters, and the very real probability of confusion and extra traffic congestion in its initial stages of operation, the educative nature of the marketing effort will be greater than that in the introduction of most transit programs. Consequently the marketing program will not only be more extensive, it will begin earlier and continue longer than most.

A specific question-- germane to this first experiment only-- that must be posed and answered in our own material from the beginning is why the Santa Monica Freeway is the one being used. The reason is that this particular freeway is the best equipped technologically at this time for the program. because of high standards of alignment, grade and high volume. Items include the centrally controlled information signs along the route, a network of measuring sensors implanted in the pavement, and metering lights already in operation at the on-ramps.

Marketing Strategy (Continued)

It will make use of several types of publicity, promotion, and -- closer to the date of inauguration, paid advertising -- on a planned, regular schedule that continues beyond the opening as long as possible for the duration of the minimum 12-months of the experiment, if not longer.

The support of elected officials, on the State level as well as that of the communities to be directly affected by altered traffic patterns and congestion, will be a necessary, specific objective of our marketing efforts.

In order to give the freeway project a memorable, meaningful, and promotable identity, it needs a distinct and recognizable name and theme applicable to both bus transportation and car pools. The name should be generic one that can be identified and used with future similar freeway projects, such as those already scheduled for portions of the Hollywood, Golden State, and Harbor Freeways next year.

We propose the name "Diamond Lane Express" to be used with the specific freeway name of each project as it is implemented. This first experiment, then, will be known as the: Santa Monica Freeway Diamond Lane Express.

An identifying diamond-shaped mark (for use with this and all future similar projects) will be developed to incorporate and promote the diamond marking now being employed by CalTrans to identify all exclusive bus and car pool lanes on the freeway, and by-pass lanes on the on-ramps, in the experiment. Copy lines will be developed to exploit the diamond theme in slogans used in all forms of advertisement and promotion--i.e.: "Ride the Diamond Lane;" "Diamonds are the commuter's best friend;" "Move through traffic on the Diamond Lane;" "It's crystal clear: the Diamond route is your fastest way downtown and back."

Many promotional devices will also take advantage of the theme, such as:

Diamond Lane Express window stickers for the
Park and Ride lots;

Diamond Lane Express Riders Kits (brochures,
timetables, etc.) for those responding to
advertising, calling for information, and
for use by the Mobile Information Teams;

Diamond Lane Express press kits for publicity,
press conferences, etc.

All uses of the name will support our underlying marketing theme which stresses all the good, positive benefits of the project-- i. e., economy, convenience, environmental improvement, energy conservation, better utilization of existing transit facilities whether by bus or car pool. The project will be presented as the true pilot experiment that it is, but with the unmistakable overtone of permanency as opposed to one that can be turned off with a few indignant letters to City Hall.

The long-range theme of this project as another step in the development of public transportation's own freeway system (such as the El Monte Busway) will also be carried through the marketing program. This will continue our efforts to build an acceptance of public transit as an integral, logical part of the area's streets and freeway system, not just an obstacle to the private auto.

Marketing Elements

It should be noted that as of August 1, 1975, UMTA has not yet approved a third party agreement with an outside advertising agency to handle the newspaper, radio and billboard advertising for this project.

Advertising Media

Because of the localized nature of the project, will be concentrated in local newspapers, outdoor posters, and radio. Metropolitan L. A. newspapers, although used in a more limited manner, will also be utilized because of the scope and significance of the project, and the fact that such progressive transit improvements and experiments should be given the widest possible exposure. At the same time, metropolitan papers will also help us reach many prospects not covered by the Westside media.

Marketing Elements (Continued)

Literature will be produced to provide a full description of the program, explaining its purpose and operation, its significance as recognized in its sponsorship by a national agency (UMTA), and the relationship of Cal Trans, SMMBL, RTD and CHP elements. Material will include a complete system brochure, route maps and new route information folders, Park and Ride brochures, bus schedules, a Cal Trans brochure on the use of the express lane and special on-ramps, a commuter computer brochure on car pooling together with application form, and an SMMBL brochure and bus schedules. It is essential that all of the promotional pieces produced by the respective agencies contain sufficient general information pertaining to the use of the lane, car pools, buses, etc. It is necessary that copy be all-encompassing and, therefore, that each of the respective agencies have an opportunity to review the advertising copy of each of the other agencies involved in the project.

Publicity events will be created and covered on a coordinated basis between RTD, SMMBL, Cal Trans and CHP News Bureaus at every opportunity. Releases will be disseminated on the widest possible level in the Los Angeles area, with particular emphasis on the affected Westside region. Newspapers, radio and television will be utilized. A press conference to announce the opening of the project is scheduled for September 15 at the Greater Los Angeles Press Club.

Mobile Information Teams will cover major employment centers, public agency buildings (City, State and Federal), and shopping centers to promote the project, with major areas of concentration in the Los Angeles CBD and Westside area. Mobile Information Teams will commence promotion of the project on September 2. Team members will answer questions concerning the project and hand out the

Marketing Elements (Continued)

literature of all of the agencies concerned (RTD, SMMBL, Commuter Computer and Cal Trans). The Downtown Businessmens' Association will also distribute literature. RTD display units will be converted to full information centers for this project, complete with racks containing the literature of each of the agencies concerned. The units will be put on display in heavy traffic centers and rotated on a prescribed basis. Mobile Information Team members will work at the displays on a prescribed basis.

Cal Trans highway personnel will be instrumental in the educative aspect of the marketing plan. Cal Trans personnel will hand out Cal Trans literature, Commuter Computer brochures and application forms, and bus information to drivers at freeway on-ramps commencing September 2 and continuing for a period of four weeks. Commuter Computer and bus information messages will be shown on the changeable message signs on this freeway commencing August 18 and continuing for at least one year.

Commuter Computer. This car pool matching service offers a natural and effective tie-in with both Mobile Information Team public contact and News Bureau publicity efforts. RTD display units will also serve as "Sign-up Centers" for the Commuter Computer car pool project. This will be augmented by the use of Commuter Computer's "'75 Pool", a unique, attention-getting hybrid demonstration car put together with parts of several makes to symbolize the car pool effect.

Marketing Elements (Continued)

Evaluation and Research -- In order to maximize the effectiveness of this marketing program both for its own immediate objectives as a model for future freeway projects, it is suggested to make use of the firm TSC early on in the program as well as intermittently during its operation. Cal Trans facilities and personnel, experienced in data gathering and evaluation, will also be utilized in this work. We recommend a sampling of users sometime in the first month, half-way through, and again at the end of the experimental period. Results of this final sampling will allow us to make a substantive, qualitative evaluation of the general degree of success of the project and our marketing efforts to that point. With this information a determination can and will be made as to any specific marketing activities to be added or increased beyond the six months' period with whatever funds remain available.

1. Formal contact with the media will begin August 29th with notification to the press that Cal Trans personnel will begin handing out informational literature on the project to motorists at freeway on-ramps commencing September 2. The second major contact with the media will be through a general press conference for all media, briefing them in more detail on the upcoming project. This press conference will be held at the Greater Los Angeles Press Club on Monday, September 15.

Marketing Elements (Continued)

News Bureau dissemination of releases on a broad basis will begin during the month before the project opens (or sooner if specific Cal Trans work begins). Stories will promote the preferential lane program as a major breakthrough in both public and private transportation economy and convenience, as an aid to the energy problem, and a benefit to the environment. Releases will carry the instruction that readers write to: Diamond Lane Express, Post Office Box 15014, Los Angeles, California 90015 for detailed information concerning the project. An independent mailing house has been selected to handle filling of all requests for information. The requestor will receive a single packet containing literature from each of the agencies participating in the project.

Marketing Elements (Continued)

Informational press kits will be hand-carried to newspapers among the following list:

NEWSPAPERS

Los Angeles Times

Full Run and West Side Edition

Herald-Examiner

Santa Monica Outlook

Beverly Hills Independent

Brentwood-Westwood Hills Press

Culver City Independent

Palisades-Malibu News

Roberts-Marina News

Westchester-Ladera Observer

West Los Angeles Independent

Dean Newspapers

Westchester-Marina News Advertiser Press

Culver City-Mar Vista Star-News Advertiser

L.A. Mesa-Tribune News Advertiser-Press

Inglewood-Morningside News Advertiser-Press

& Lennox Citizen

Hawthorne Citizen & Lawndale Tribune

Independent-Journal Newspapers

Culver City Journal

Marina del Rey Marina Mail

Santa Monica Independent

Palisadian-Post

Malibu Mail

Topanga Mail

Pacific Palisades Mail

2. Public service requests will be made to radio and television stations in the area the week before startup to announce the program and bus and traffic changes to be effected. Stations will include the following:

Marketing Elements (Continued)

T. V.: KABC-TV (7) KNXT-TV (2)
 KTTV-TV (11) KNBC-TV (4)

RADIO: KFWB, KBIG, KABC, KJOI, KNX, KPOL, KMPC, KFI, KFAC,
 KFOX, KHJ, KCRW (FM)-SANTA MONICA, KSRF (FM)-SANTA
 MONICA, KALI (Spanish Language), KDAY-SANTA MONICA

3. The advertising portion of the marketing program will begin with full page ads by Cal Trans in the Los Angeles Times, Herald-Examiner, and Evening Outlook on September 2, September 16, followed by full page ads on September 18 by RTD in the metropolitans, and by SMMBL in the Evening Outlook. On September 25, RTD will again run a full page ad in the metropolitans, and SMMBL in the Evening Outlook. On September 28, RTD will run a full page ad in the metropolitans. On September 29, Cal Trans will run full page ads in the Los Angeles Times, Herald-Examiner and Evening Outlook, followed by RTD full page ads in the metropolitans on September 30. Cal Trans, RTD and SMMBL will synchronize their advertising schedules for the months following the opening of the project.

In addition, RTD will put up three billboards on East/West and North/South streets near the freeway on-ramps. Additionally, three painted bulletins on park and ride will go up over a four month period and will be rotated throughout the origin communities during this initial period of patronage building. (Billboard exposure along the Santa Monica Freeway is limited).

Marketing Elements (Continued)

4. Mobile Information Team public contact and distribution of literature in the Westside area and the Los Angeles CBD will commence September 2. Coverage will shift emphasis from over-all Diamond Lane Express promotion to SCRTD line and park and ride promotion as the program gets further underway.

5. Cal Trans highway personnel will begin their on-ramp handout program of informational literature on September 2.

6. Timetables for new SMMBL and RTD lines will be distributed to all major Westside locations the week before the experiment begins. (A complete list of the Thrifty Drug Stores and U. S. Post Office outlets is enclosed as Attachment A.) Buses will also be stocked with timetables.

7. Full page newspaper ads will be placed in all Westside areas. A schedule of the newspaper and the number of insertions for ads placed prior to formal commencement of the project are shown below:

Marketing Elements (continued)

L.A. Times (West Side Edition)	- 6 insertions
Santa Monica Outlook plus Weeklies	- 6 insertions
Dean Newspapers	- 6 insertions
Independent Journal Newspapers	- 6 insertions
Palisadian-Post plus Mail	- 6 insertions
Los Angeles Times (Full Run)	- 4 insertions
L. A. Herald-Examiner	- 4 insertions

8. Cal Trans will begin airing 30-second radio spots, three times per day, the week of September 15th and continuing through September 26th. RTD will begin airing 60-second radio spots the week of September 22 and continuing for a period of four to six weeks. Although radio coverage obviously extends well beyond the local area, it will give the necessary repetition to reach the targeted commuter audience, and serves to promote use of public transportation in the Los Angeles area as a progressive, innovative force. In addition to promoting general bus service, these commercials will also push the use of car pools for non-bus users everywhere, as well as on the Santa Monica Freeway.

Stations to be used include: KABC, KALI, KBIG, KFAC, KGIL, KLAC, KGFJ, KNX, KPOL, KWKW, KRLA, KHJ, KIIS, KWST, KFI, KFWB.

Marketing Elements (continued)

9. Four RTD store displays will be converted by Customer Relations staff members to carry the story of the project, its significance, routes, and methods of operation. These dramatic and attention-getting displays will be set up with the first appearance of the Mobile Information Teams in Westside centers, and will act as focal points for these activities as well as the Commuter Computer applicant signups.

10. Community Relations personnel will canvas local areas to enlist the active support of organizations such as service and civic clubs. They will be encouraged to back the project in their own local area as a worthwhile public service that will benefit their residents. Community Relations personnel will also operate as liaison between SMMBL and RTD.

11. A field day will be held on Sunday, September 28. To highlight the national impact and future potential of the entire preferential lane system, it is recommended that the Director of Transportation and representatives of UMTA in Washington D. C. be invited, as well as local, city, county and state officials.

Marketing Elements (Continued)

The formal ceremonies will be concluded with everyone (press included) boarding an SMMBL coach, and RTD double-deck bus, or a Cal Trans car pool automobile (at least one of each will be present) for an inaugural demonstration cavalcade run along the route to downtown and back.

Budget

The current budget of the Southern California Rapid Transit District was established without provision for the marketing program described herein. The activities and costs listed below, therefore, will require the full funding support of the sponsoring agency for implementation at the recommended level:

Advertising

Newspapers-Production and Space	\$ 82,350
Radio-Production and Time	51,000
Outdoor - Production and Space	43,500
Bus Cards (SMMBL and SCRTD) and Misc. Graphics	7,000
Mobile Team Activities, Westside and CBD	7,500

Literature Production

System Brochure - 500,000 pieces @ \$50/M	25,000
Park/Ride folders and maps, 250,000 pieces @ \$25/M	6,250
Route folders (seven SCRTD; four SMMBL) 250,000 pieces @ \$30/M	7,500
Four-color System display maps 10,000 pieces @ \$100/M	1,000
Other passenger information items (door cards and pocket schedule cards)	2,200

Marketing Elements (Continued)

Display Units

Existing display units which contain graphics for program presentation and slave racks for literature will be converted from existing use to project use. The estimated cost of converting seven display units, including graphics, production, preparation and finishing is \$1,000 each; total cost:

\$ 4,000

Park/Ride Counter Cards

Poster-size cards showing the location of parking lots for bus or carpool use with pockets for literature, will be produced for distribution to places such as drugstores and post offices. Estimated cost of 1,500 pieces at \$4/each:

\$ 6,000

Direct Mail

First class mailing of brochures, kits, etc., in response to requests and through use of Downtown Businessmen's Association lists: 200,000 pieces @ \$100/M \$20,000

Press Conferences

Press kits, news support, preparation of material for production, refreshments and arrangements for news conferences:

\$ 5,000

Total Cost of Transit User Information-RTD

\$268,300

Marketing Elements (Continued)

Cal Trans

Production of Brochure: 100,000 @ \$35/M	\$ 3,500
Manning Booths for Commuter Computer Sign-Up 200 Man Hours @ \$20.00 per man hour	\$ 4,000
Distribution of Literature at Freeway On-Ramps: Six month period: 1,750 Man Hours @ \$20/mh	\$ 35,000
News Media Publications	\$ 57,500
Total Auto User Cost	\$100,000
 Total Cost of Marketing-Public Information Program	 \$368,300