



NEWS

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MTA PRESS RELATIONS

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MTA CHIEF EXECUTIVE PREVIEWS \$60 BILLION LONG RANGE STRATEGIC TRANSPORTATION PLAN

A preview of a proposed \$60 billion, long range strategic transportation plan for Los Angeles is included in "A Vision for the MTA", a paper detailing the Authority's goals and objectives, and its accomplishments during its first 21 months.

The eight-page document, written by Franklin White, MTA Chief Executive Officer, introduces the MTA's long-range strategic transportation plan for the region. The paper is being distributed to elected officials and community leaders throughout Southern California, and in Washington D.C. and Sacramento.

"We have prepared this document to provide a preview of our new long range strategic plan, and have incorporated the concerns MTA Board members have expressed at several workshops. These workshops are part of the Board's review of the long range plan, and we expect it to be acted upon within the next several months," White said.

"Despite our many incentives promoting bus and rail, car and van pooling, the fact of this new year is that more commuters are driving by themselves, alone in their cars on their way to work, than ever before," White continued.

"The statistics are staggering," he said. "In the last five years, ridership on buses -- here and across the county -- has dropped sharply. Unless we Angelenos change our behavior, we will strangle on our own congestion.

"In the decades ahead, driving alone in rush hours must become as politically incorrect as smoking in a hospital ward," White stated.

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"We believe it is timely to clearly state the goals and objectives of the MTA," White said. "We propose, therefore, over the next 20 years, to invest more than \$60 billion to fund our operational needs and build new transportation systems," he noted. "The greatest share of these funds will be used to maintain and improve service levels throughout the county and buy new buses."

White noted that an earlier long range plan "incorporated some far-reaching ideas that just aren't attainable, due largely to its overly ambitious nature and the unanticipated scaled-down economic environment unexpectedly forced upon us by the deep and long lasting recession." The earlier document was prepared by one of the Authority's two predecessor agencies, the Los Angeles County Transportation Commission. The Commission and the Southern California Rapid Transit District were merged in April, 1993, to form the new MTA.

"Our long-range plan will be the blue print for transportation solutions and improvements for decades to come," White said. "We have included projections which we believe are far more sound than in the earlier long-range plan. We also have reduced the range of the plan to make sure it stays realistic and achievable."

White's key transportation strategies include:

- * Working with Los Angeles leaders to develop innovative strategies that control transportation demand and maximize transportation improvements. This will include strategies that may make it more expensive for people to drive alone, as well as new parking strategies that will encourage the use of transit. More HOV lanes on freeways and major streets, preemptive signals for buses, and alternative delivery services such as Smart Shuttles and Community based transit, also will be tested.
- * Continue development of the rail network by preparing to open the Metro Green Line in mid-1995, building the Pasadena Line, resolving all outstanding funding issues; build a rail line in the San Fernando Valley and complete the Red Line's East and West extensions.

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- * Improve bus interface with Metrolink trains as new service becomes available.
- * Further improve MTA's service and communications to our customers.
- * Reconsider the MTA's role as a regional carrier, striving to reduce costs without reducing services by contracting out and streamlining the way MTA operates.
- * Participate as a financial partner in the Alameda Corridor.

"It is time to stop wasting energy on the bus-versus rail debate," White said. "Because of worsening congestion, a bus and van system alone would be incapable of meeting the transit demands of the future. We need both improved bus service and extensions to our rail lines.

"The bus will remain the backbone of our public transportation system many years into the future," he added. "It will help link our expanding rail system to the destinations of our passengers. As the rail system grows, the bus system will be reformed to serve new rail stations, so that more people can travel farther and more conveniently."

"That's why, notwithstanding the high construction costs, we must continue to invest in our rail network."

The paper also included a detailed section on specific goals and procedures the MTA staff intends to carry out to improve productivity, create significant cost savings, establish strict performance standards, install more sophisticated financial information systems, seek new sources of revenues and encourage business development in and around MTA facilities.

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