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**MTA OKAYS FREE RIDES ON METRO RIDE LINE FOR
WILSHIRE CORRIDOR GRAND OPENING WEEKEND**

The MTA Board of Directors have authorized free fares on the Metro Red Line to coincide with the grand opening weekend of the new Wilshire Corridor, July 13 and 14.

The Wilshire corridor is the newest addition to the Metro Rail system, and extends the Red Line west from Westlake station a distance of two miles, with three stations on Wilshire Boulevard at Vermont Avenue, Normandie Avenue, and Western Avenue.

"We want to welcome the commuting public to the newest segment of the system, and show our appreciation for their ridership," said MTA Chairman Larry Zarian. "The free rides extend to all of the Red Line, not just the three new stations, and will be in effect all day Saturday and Sunday."

The cash fare of \$1.35 will be extended to the Red Line on Monday, July 15, making it consistent with the bus system and the Metro Blue and Green Lines. The 90-cent discount token, good on all Metro bus and rail systems, also will be accepted on the Red Line, along with all valid passes.

"This free sneak preview of the Wilshire corridor will show people how easy it will become to travel a heavily congested thoroughfare," said Joe Drew, MTA chief executive officer. "From the Western Station to Union Station, the Red Line will beat the bus by 15 to 20 minutes."

A bus/rail interface plan has been developed that will make the Western Station a major transit hub, with several express and limited stop bus lines terminating there and an estimated several thousand daily riders transferring free to the rail line or to local bus service.

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