



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW CORRIDORS MARK BEGINNING OF 24-LINE, 356-MILE EXPANSION

MTA GEARS UP FOR DEC. 15 START OF NEW METRO RAPID BUS LINES ON VERMONT AVENUE AND SOUTH BROADWAY

MTA's successful Metro Rapid bus program is poised for a 24-line expansion that will be phased in beginning Sunday, Dec. 15, with the start of service on Vermont Avenue and South Broadway. Rides on the two new lines on Dec. 15 and 16 will be free.

"Metro Rapid has been a huge success story in Los Angeles and has generated considerable interest from other large cities that are trying to grapple with congestion," said Los Angeles Mayor and MTA Board Member James Hahn. "These new Metro Rapid lines on Vermont Avenue and South Broadway will take a large bite out of the daily commute time of thousands of bus passengers and I'm confident that once again Metro Rapid will attract many new riders to the system."

The 11.9-mile Vermont Metro Rapid (Line 754) will operate on Vermont Avenue from the Metro Red Line Vermont/Sunset Station to the Metro Green Line. The 10.5-mile South Broadway Metro Rapid (Line 745) will operate on South Broadway from Union Station to the Metro Green Line.

The new lines are part of a 24-line expansion of the Metro Rapid system that will be completed by 2008. They will complement the 26-mile Wilshire/Whittier and 16-mile Ventura Metro Rapid lines which began service in June 2000. Since that time, total bus ridership on the Wilshire/Whittier and Ventura Boulevard corridors has increased by nearly 40 percent, with one third of the increase coming from passengers new to public transit.

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The Wilshire/Whittier Metro Rapid Line 720 currently has average weekday boardings of 45,000. Average weekday boardings on Ventura Metro Rapid Line 750 are 9,000.

"Metro Rapid is one of the most effective tools in our mobility tool box and an innovative way to transport our customers to jobs, medical facilities and places of recreation quickly and safely," said MTA CEO Roger Snoble. "It has demonstrated that when transit makes sense, people will ride it."

Several key attributes have contributed to Metro Rapid's success including a bus signal priority system. Developed by the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT), the bus signal priority system reduces the amount of time a Metro Rapid bus is stopped by extending the length of green traffic signals and reducing the length of red traffic signals. As a result, Metro Rapid has reduced travel times on the Wilshire/Whittier corridor by nearly 30 percent and on Ventura Boulevard by 23 percent.

MTA and LADOT anticipate that when Metro Rapid service begins on Vermont and South Broadway it will result in a 20-25 percent improvement in travel time over current service on those two corridors.

"LADOT is very pleased to be a partner with MTA in a project that is moving thousands of people quickly and efficiently" said LADOT General Manager Wayne Tanda. "We're looking forward to building the remaining 22 Metro Rapid expansion lines which will greatly improve mobility in Los Angeles."

Other key contributors to Metro Rapid's success include the use of low-floor buses to reduce passenger boarding and alighting times, easy-to-recognize buses and stations featuring "next trip" displays and information kiosks, and "rail-like" operating characteristics. Similar to most light rail systems, Metro Rapid buses stop approximately every 0.8 miles at major cross streets as opposed to limited stop and local bus service in which buses stop approximately every 0.3 miles and 0.2 miles, respectively.

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