



**Metro**

# Daily Brief

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## Federal Report Highlights Growing Use of Alternative Fuel Transit Vehicles

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) recently issued a report entitled "Alternative Fuels Study: A Report to Congress on Policy Options for Increasing the Use of Alternative Fuels in Transit Vehicles." The report, which was mandated by SAFETEA-LU, examines the current use of alternative fuel vehicles among public transportation agencies. It also evaluates factors contributing to the increasing usage of alternative fuels, analyzes barriers to expanded use of alternative fuels in public transit vehicles, and identifies future policy options. Among its findings, the study concluded that since the mid 1990's, public transportation agencies have taken advantage of existing tax and financial incentives encouraging the use of alternative fuels by purchasing increasing numbers of alternative fuel vehicles. In 2003, the national transit bus fleet consisting of alternative fuel vehicles comprised nearly 14%, a dramatic increase from 1995 when the overall percentage was only 3.8%. The report also cites higher capital, operating and maintenance costs as a major obstacle in preventing more widespread deployment of alternative fuel vehicles. Finally, the study recommends the creation of new incentive programs as well as the enhancement of existing programs as a means of increasing the overall number of alternative fuel transit vehicles in the nationwide fleet.

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Metro operates the largest alternative fueled transit fleet in the United States and

is currently testing battery technologies, Hydrogen mixed fuels and hybrid bus applications.

### **Metro Seeks Funding Partners to Support Regional Disparity Study**

As a result of a May 2005, ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit and recent guidance from the U.S. Department of Transportation, Metro has commenced efforts to perform a disparity study in support of its Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program. The study will seek to determine whether or not discrimination or its effects exist in Metro's transportation contracting industry. The results of the disparity study will have a significant impact on Metro's programs aimed at increasing small business access to contracting and procurement opportunities.

A key element to the success of the disparity study is to garner funding support for the estimated \$1.5 million effort. Metro has already appropriated \$500,000 for the study and has identified several potential funding partners. Staff is currently working with each organization to determine commitment levels, with an expectation that we will hire a consultant in early Fiscal Year 2008. It is anticipated that the study will then take 18 months to complete.

### **Los Angeles Times Story on Metro Gold Line Aerial Structure Cracks**

The *Los Angeles Times* may publish a story as early as tomorrow, focusing on cracks discovered in several shear keys on the Metro Gold Line's aerial structure that connects the Chinatown and Union Stations. The shear keys are designed to help spread tension in the event of a major earthquake but do not affect the structural integrity of the guideway. Thus, engineers with HNTB Corp., the guideway designer, have assured Metro that it is safe to operate trains even though the keys are cracking. Metro Rail Operations staff also frequently inspect the tracks and guideway structure to ensure Metro Gold Line safety.

Two shear keys have developed significant cracks and at least one other is showing signs of hairline cracks. Metro has hired an independent structural engineer to inspect all six shear keys on the aerial guideway. A report is due by the end of this week. At that time, it should be determined whether the fix is minor or major in nature. It is unclear at this time what has caused the cracks or whether there may have been a flaw in the design or construction.

Cracks in one shear key were first discovered in August 2005 when small pieces of concrete broke off without incident. Netting has been placed on the concrete columns as a precaution. The delay in instituting a permanent solution stems from a dispute between Metro and the Pasadena Gold Line Construction Authority regarding the responsibility for fixing 70 punch list items for the line

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(including the shear keys). To complicate matters, the joint venture that built the Chinatown Aerial Guideway has since been disbanded. Rick Thorpe, Metro's Chief Capital Management Officer reported to the Times that if latent defects are found, insurance should cover the cost of repairs.

### ***U.S. News & World Report* Features Los Angeles' Congestion**

Metro's Chief Planning Officer, Carol Inge, Executive Officer of Countywide Planning & Development, Brad McAllester, and I were interviewed today by a reporter from *U.S. News & World Report* for a story on nationwide traffic. The reporter was briefed on the agency's Long Range Transportation Plan and several projects and programs underway at Metro. Potential transit improvement projects that are currently waiting for funding but could go a long way towards alleviating the traffic problems in Los Angeles were also noted. The story is expected to run as part of the magazine's March issue.

### **Stolen LAX Police Property Recovered During Metro Vehicle Theft Investigation**

Yesterday, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Detectives assigned to the Transit Services Bureau conducted an investigation concerning an earlier discovery of a stolen Metro Chevrolet Lumina (stolen on November 10, 2006). Detectives identified a suspect and attempted to serve him with Search and Ramey Warrants at his residence in Los Angeles. During the search, detectives uncovered a loaded .9mm Beretta pistol and a .45 caliber Smith and Wesson pistol (both of which were on his person). Afterwards, it was determined that the .45 caliber gun was stolen during the burglary of a vehicle belonging to an LAX police officer. LAX detectives positively identified a number of other items located in the suspect's camper trailer, as well. We will keep you updated as this investigation progresses.

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