



METRO MOVES

EARTHQUAKE '94

L.A.'s Transportation System Meets the Ultimate Challenge

As the aftershocks subside and Los Angeles embarks on its long recovery from the traumatic Jan. 17 earthquake, one thing remains certain: the traveling public has a new appreciation for public transit. Within hours of the Northridge earthquake, the MTA, along with other municipal transit agencies and the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA), which operates Metrolink, rallied to reassure the Los Angeles public that bus and rail systems were up and running.

On the day of the quake itself, MTA buses and Metro Blue Line trains achieved 94% service delivery, despite the numerous debris-strewn streets in the San Fernando Valley. The next day, the Metro Red Line was running on schedule after safety inspections gave the subway tunnels a clean bill of health.

Reassuring Sight

The sight of MTA buses and trains on the county's streets, freeways and tracks let citizens know they were not stranded. Many of the county's commuters, accustomed to their beloved automobiles, looked to public transit for the first time. They called the MTA telephone information lines to learn how to use the system, resulting in a 40% increase in the number of calls.

Emergency Transportation Service


Almost as soon as the earth stopped shaking, the MTA began laying plans for both immediate and long-term emergency transportation service. Requests began pouring in to the bus dispatch center for emergency transportation of people who were displaced from damaged homes and hospitals. It wasn't long before the MTA staff had handled 156 requests for buses; of this number, 110 MTA buses were provided, and arrangements were made for other area transit providers to handle the remaining 46.

"A lot of people counted on us to get their families to shelter and to find food," said MTA bus operator Willie Gibson.

Gibson should know. The 20-year employee drove a Line 424 bus through the south San Fernando Valley along the east-west Ventura Boulevard on the day of the quake. He described the scene as a frantic mess. "Ridership was light early in the day," said Gibson.

"A lot of people counted on us to get their families to shelter and to find food."

"The passengers were mostly senior citizens looking for a place to get some food. They asked me if I knew where to find an open grocery store, a restaurant, or a hardware store. I took them to places on my route where I'd seen lines of people.

"I was very proud that day," said Gibson. "I really felt that if the buses hadn't been there, a lot of people would not have gotten the emergency help they needed." 

Help from High Places

California Gov. Pete Wilson and President Bill Clinton both toured the areas that sustained major earthquake damage, and have vowed their help in getting relief to Southern California.

Governor's Emergency Relief Task Force

Having met the county's most urgent needs, MTA staff began setting up a public transportation network to handle the increased transit demands during the time it takes to repair our damaged freeways.

California's Governor Pete Wilson, in cooperation with U.S. Secretary of Transportation Federico Peña, established a transportation relief task force made up of municipal, county, state and federal transportation officials to identify problems, secure federal and state emergency



When President Clinton came to town, MTA employees were enlisted to shuttle the entourage from the Burbank Airport to some of the county's most damaged areas. Above, MTA van driver Steve Ford not only got to meet the President, but he has this photo to prove it. MTA vans also carried Governor Wilson, and Senators Diane Feinstein and Barbara Boxer.

funding resources and respond to the public's short- and long-term mobility needs. The MTA heads up two of the task force's

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TRANSPORTATION HOTLINE

For information about public transportation or ridesharing options, call the 24-hour line (800) COMMUTE.

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Metrolink Shines

Antelope Valley Ridership Triples Overnight

Thanks to Metrolink, thousands of commuters in the areas most critically affected by the earthquake were able to get to work by train instead of driving alone in their cars on the overly clogged freeways. The collapse of the State Route 14 freeway at the I-5 Interchange caused Metrolink ridership from the Antelope Valley to Los Angeles to triple overnight.

In fact, Metrolink trains offered one of the few accessible connections between the Antelope Valley and Los Angeles. To handle the load, Metrolink increased its number of passenger cars from six to 36, while increasing the number of daily trains from 61 to 68.

In less than a month after the quake, the SCRRA opened seven new stations and extended its commuter reach 54 miles from Santa Clarita to Lancaster and Palmdale on the northeast and 10 miles from Moorpark to Camarillo to the west.

What it Took to Make it Happen



Lancaster Station where crews worked around the clock to get track ready for Metrolink trains.

The SCRRA didn't have to do it alone. The agency's partnership with public and private groups literally produced miracles. The challenge was to quickly and safely provide alternative commuter rail service — especially in the Antelope Valley where service was not scheduled to start up for several months. In cooperation with Southern Pacific Railroad, existing freight train tracks were put into emergency service.

Metrolink's engineering and construction teams worked 24 hours a day for 12 days to get the track ready and build the stations in Lancaster, Palmdale and Sylmar. Among the numerous groups the SCRRA



credits for helping are Caltrans, Amtrak, Southern Pacific and Santa Fe Railroads, the MTA and many local cities and counties, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the unexpected contribution of a number of Navy Seabees from Port Hueneme who showed up for added manpower.

Southern California Edison contributed by installing the necessary traffic signals within days, and numerous others, including contractors, suppliers and support people pitched in. Train cars were quickly leased from Caltrain in the Bay Area and GO TRANSIT in Toronto.

Simultaneously with the work on the Santa Clarita/Antelope Valley Line, work was sped up on the 58-mile Ventura County Line, extending the system 11 miles from Moorpark to Camarillo and adding two emergency stations in Camarillo and Northridge.

Meanwhile, work continues on Metrolink's own Antelope Valley tracks, which will run parallel to the Southern Pacific tracks. With the current escalated construction



Navy Seabees working on tracks.

schedule, the new track should be in service by May 1.

What's Ahead

Recently commuters riding the Santa Clarita/Antelope Valley Line have experienced delays. Metrolink crews continue to work 24 hours a day to upgrade the railroad track from freight service to accommodate the faster commuter trains. A steady improvement can be expected over the next few weeks, and by early March, the trains will be faster, and there will be a better timetable.

Additionally, it's estimated that by early summer, commuters will be able to cut 40 minutes from their travel from Lancaster to Los Angeles. To do this, Metrolink crews are:

- Building new track dedicated only to Metrolink trains between Lancaster and Palmdale, increasing travel speed from 50 mph to 79 mph.
- Replacing older track and straightening curves, increasing the speed in Soledad Canyon from 30 mph to 45 mph.
- Rehabilitating the tunnel between Santa Clarita and Sylmar/San Fernando, increasing the speed to 40 mph from 20 mph.
- Improving the communication system between Lancaster and Santa Clarita, allowing better control of train movements in the area.
- Repairing railroad track and grade crossings between Burbank and Los Angeles.

Metrolink currently operates four routes covering 350 miles and 54 train stations. Pre-earthquake, ridership averaged 9,500; post-earthquake, ridership jumped to 31,276 at its peak, and currently maintains a daily average of 18,000. The Orange County Line is scheduled to open



U.S. Transportation Secretary Federico Peña tours the new Metrolink station in Lancaster with Richard Stanger, Metrolink's executive director, and John Rinard, Metrolink's director of engineering and construction.

► "Help.." continued from page 1

four subcommittees: Art Leahy, the MTA's executive officer for operations, chairs the Transit Subcommittee, and Linda Bohlinger, the MTA's deputy executive officer of capital planning, chairs the Finance Subcommittee, which oversees the funding for L.A.'s emergency transportation needs.

Federal Funding Eases Recovery

With earthquake damage to the county's transportation infrastructure estimated at nearly \$2 billion, the MTA moved quickly to obtain federal emergency relief funds.

Bohlinger's finance subcommittee (under the Governor's task force) is coordinating federal and state transportation emergency funding applications to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)/Office of Emergency Services (OES). The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is assisting the FEMA/OES damage survey report team in determining transit project eligibility.

A total of \$515 million in FEMA emergency relief funds has been earmarked by Congress, of which \$315 million is designated for mass transit use, and \$200 million is slated for local streets and roads repair.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has provided \$1.391 billion from its emergency relief funds, which is specifically designated for the repair and rebuilding of damaged freeways, to provide interim detours, as well as fund (along with FEMA) the increased Metrolink service.

FEMA was the first to respond. On Jan. 28, a \$10-million cash advance was delivered to the MTA; an additional \$6-million FEMA cash advance was received the following week. The money was immediately applied to defray the cost of extra Metrolink and MTA bus service initiated to serve commuters in the Antelope Valley, Santa Clarita, San Fernando Valley and West Los Angeles.

"Federal officials are working hard to help Los Angeles through this crisis," said Franklin White, the MTA's chief executive officer. "Our job is to put this money to work for the people who need it." **M**

Positive Press for Metro Rail

Metro Red Line Celebrates First Anniversary

Transportation officials celebrated the first anniversary of the Metro Red Line on Jan. 30, praising the system for becoming a pivotal transportation link for thousands of daily commuters.

Red Line Ridership Up

Since Red Line service began, the system has carried about 4.87 million riders and trains have logged some 712,000 miles. MTA operations reports that Metro Red Line passenger loads have increased lately by 40% due to the increased Metrolink patronage from the San Fernando Valley. The Red Line is currently carrying an average of 21,000 passengers a day, up from an average of 15,000.

"Recent events have proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that the development and operation of a regional public transportation system is crucial if we are to rid our streets and highways of gridlock traffic," said Franklin White, the MTA's chief executive officer.



MTA CEO Franklin White addresses the press conference at the Metro Red Line anniversary celebration.

"Since the Red Line opened one year ago, underground L.A. has become the safest place in downtown Los Angeles," White said. "There is no pick-pocketing and graffiti is non-existent."

The Metro Red Line now runs 3.2 miles from Union Station to MacArthur Park, connecting with Metrolink and the Metro Blue Line from Long Beach. The second segment will extend the line west to Wilshire Boulevard and Western Avenue (scheduled to open in 1996) and north to Hollywood Boulevard and Vine (by 1998). The third segment includes extensions to Pico Boulevard and San Vicente, to North Hollywood and to East Los Angeles. Once all three segments are built, the subway will span about 23 miles.

No Structural Damage From Quake

The Metro Red Line's subway tunnels, both the operating section and those under construction, suffered no structural damage from the Northridge earthquake or the aftershocks.



Federal Transit Administrator Gordon Linton (left) tours a section of Red Line tunnel near MacArthur Park with MTA CEO Franklin White.

"Recognizing that a panel of tunneling experts continues to conduct an investigation into the integrity of the Red Line tunnels, it is apparent that, despite the magnitude of this week's tragic earthquake, the work underway and finished tunnels have withstood a major test of mother nature," said Gordon Linton, Federal Transit Administrator. Linton and other officials toured a segment of the tunnel beneath MacArthur Park three days after the big quake.

"Structural and safety engineers completed an end-to-end walk-through inspection immediately after the earthquake, and they found virtually no damage to the tunnels or the subway system," said Ed McSpedon, the MTA's executive officer for construction and president of the Rail Construction Corporation (RCC). "Also, the Vermont corridor tunnel construction project sustained no damage despite the fact that the permanent concrete liner is not even in place yet."

Finally, McSpedon reported that once safe conditions were determined, nearly 80 feet of the Segment 2 tunnel was drilled on the day of the earthquake.

Other Lines Fare Well

RCC also led a surface inspection of other Metro Rail projects in the Los Angeles area — including the Metro Blue Line, which is operating between Long Beach and downtown, and the Metro Green Line under construction between El Segundo and Norwalk. There was no street-level damage that could affect public safety or impede traffic. **M**

Getting to Work in the '90s:

Consider Ridesharing or Telecommuting

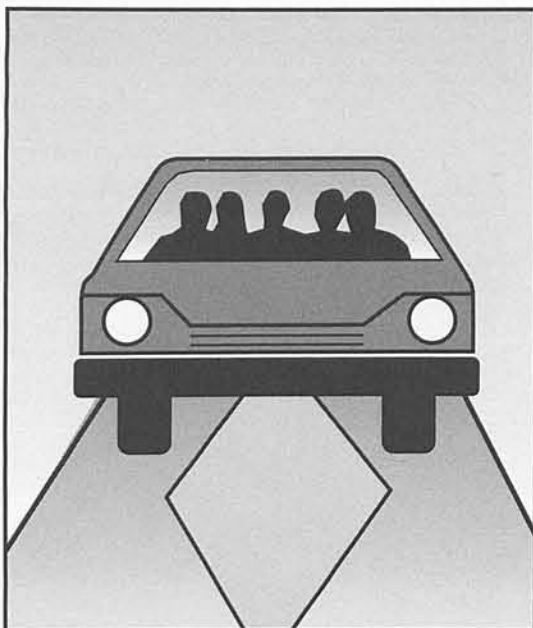
The MTA joins with Caltrans and Commuter Transportation Services (CTS) in encouraging county residents to rideshare or telecommute. Just as it did when the summer Olympics came to town in 1984, a special circumstance has forced county residents to rethink their commuting habits and restructure their work routines.

To find out about any new public transportation service available as a result of the earthquake, or for information about any other facet of mass transit or ridesharing, call (800) COMMUTE.

Key Words: Flexibility and Choice

In addition to using public transportation, there are other options.

- Employers can stagger work hours to reduce peak-hour commute times.
- Work weeks also can be compressed into four days. For example, an employee may work 40 hours in four work days, or 80 hours in nine work days, taking the extra day off and easing traffic congestion.
- Bus and rail transit subsidies up to \$60 a month for each employee are available tax free. MTA's Corporate Transit Partnership (213-972-4680), can provide personally tailored bus/rail itineraries and other assistance.



- The subsidy can also be used for monthly Metrolink passes, which are available to reduce per-fare rides. For information, call (800) 371-LINK.
- MTA offers monthly passes as well that can greatly reduce per-trip expense. Call MTA Customer Relations at (213) 972-6235 to find the nearest pass sales outlet.
- CTS can help place you in a carpool, vanpool or buspool. A carpool consists of anywhere from two to six people; a van pool is between seven and 12 people, and a buspool is 20 or more people. Call (800) 286-RIDE.
- CTS offers free assistance to employers who are interested in telecommuting.

Call CTS at (800) 286-RIDE.

- Employers also can allow employees to work at home, or at an off-site telecommuting center, one day a week. Pacific Bell also offers a telecommuting information hotline that features information and technical assistance. The number is (800) 303-0309.

Employers may also wish to consider "telework centers," offices located a short bus ride or drive from residential housing developments where employees of many different companies work one or more days a week to avoid lengthy commutes. There are several telework centers in the Southern California area:

- Antelope Valley Telebusiness Center (805) 726-7700
- Simi Valley Telework Center (805) 526-3900
- Ontario Telebusiness Center (909) 391-2510
- Telecommuting Work Center of Riverside (909) 466-8419
- Highland Telework Center (909) 425-8060
- Appie Valley Telework Center (619) 946-9675

Two more telework centers are being planned for Santa Clarita and Long Beach. **M**

The Bus Connection

The county's bus system has kept pace with Metrolink's growth, adding bus lines where necessary to accommodate long-distance commuters. Less than a week after the quake, Metrolink passengers disembarking in Sylmar, Burbank and Glendale were being served by a total of four new, and 14 rerouted, bus lines.

The MTA is prepared to add as many as 60 more buses in the San Fernando Valley to augment existing routes and to serve the increased Metrolink ridership between the Santa Clarita and Antelope valleys and the Los Angeles Basin.

"In short, within 10 days after the earthquake, the MTA created, augmented or rerouted a total of 27 bus lines to assist earthquake-affected commuters," said the MTA's Executive Officer of Operations, Art Leahy. Municipal bus lines, including Los Angeles Department of Transportation, Santa Monica Municipal Bus Lines, and

Foothill Transit have also increased their routes and connections.

The quake also collapsed a portion of the Santa Monica Freeway (I-10), long known as the heaviest traveled freeway in the world, making urgent measures necessary. Within three days, a new MTA bus

"In short, within 10 days after the earthquake, the MTA created, augmented or rerouted a total of 27 bus lines to assist earthquake-affected commuters."

service was in place, with 22 added buses for five existing Westside lines and one in the San Fernando Valley. The extra buses, along with detour routes and HOV lanes provided by Caltrans, made traveling between the Westside and downtown Los Angeles much easier than originally predicted after the quake.

LAX to Downtown

On Feb. 14, the MTA and Foothill Transit began offering an express bus service during peak travel times between the City Bus Center at Los Angeles International Airport, the Aviation Green Line Station in El Segundo, and downtown Los Angeles.

The new line, known as Line 646, is the 28th bus line the MTA has either created, added to or rerouted to help keep people moving following the Northridge earthquake. **M**

Highway Help

Metro Call Boxes Relocated

Santa Clarita motorists who are using "The Old Road" as an alternate route to reach the Golden State Freeway (I-5) can now appreciate the familiar sight of Metro call boxes. In less than two weeks after the earthquake, freeway call boxes were relocated to "The Old Road" between Calgrove Boulevard and I-5.

Metro Freeway Service Patrol Beefed Up



Metro tow trucks line up for a daily patrol.

Another remedy for freeway motorists experiencing bumper-to-bumper traffic, is the expansion of the Metro Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) to cover freeway alternate routes on surface streets.

FSP, originally implemented jointly by the MTA, Caltrans and the California Highway Patrol in 1991, provides a special team of about 150 tow-truck drivers to assist stranded motorists during rush hours on the county's most congested freeways. FSP keeps traffic moving by quickly towing stalled cars out of the mainstream and furnishing them with emergency road service free of charge.

Eight conventional tow trucks and two big-rig trucks were added to FSP's roving fleet after the earthquake, and service hours were expanded for nine other trucks. The enhanced service, which began the day after the big temblor, is operating on the Golden State Freeway (I-5), the Santa Monica Freeway (I-10), the Antelope Valley Freeway (State Route 14), the Ventura and Hollywood freeways (U.S. 101), and the Simi Valley Freeway (State Route 118). In less than three weeks, the new service provided more than 1,500 assists.

The big-rig tow trucks are cruising the I-5 to help alleviate delays on this major inter-county truck route. The proportion of land-blocking incidents on this freeway is much higher, since there are no shoulders. During the first 12-day period, 30 big trucks were cleared from freeway lanes, and more than 130 other assists were made with the special big-rig service. **M**

Briefly Speaking

An Assortment of News and Information

\$ Saved on the MTA's Professional Service Contracts

When Fiscal Year 1994 ends on June 30, the MTA is expected to have cut in half the number of contracts awarded for outside professional services as recently as two years ago.

A report to the MTA's Finance, Budget and Efficiency Committee Feb. 9 revealed that the MTA's two predecessor agencies, the Los Angeles County Transportation Commission (LACTC) and the Southern California Rapid Transit District (RTD), awarded a combined 675 non-rail related professional service contracts totaling \$145.5 million in FY 1992.

In FY 1993, the number dipped to 560 contracts totaling \$58.3 million in value. So far in FY 1994, the number of contracts awarded is 113. On an annual basis, the MTA may award 340 contracts with a possible value of \$45.2 million expected by the end of the fiscal year on June 30, 1994 — a 49% reduction from FY 1992 levels.

"From the beginning of my tenure with MTA, I have asked all departments to look carefully at their costs to see where cuts could be made, especially in view of the \$126 million operating shortfall we face in FY 1995," said Franklin White, the MTA's CEO.

"Our staff of transportation professionals is one of the finest in the nation. I believe that many of the tasks that were formerly contracted out can be done just as well or better in-house — often with substantial savings," added White.

The most significant cutbacks occurred in professional services, planning and construction contracts. By way of comparison, the FY 1992 amount spent on contracts in these categories was almost \$133 million, while by the end of FY 1994, MTA will have spent approximately \$21.5 million in the same categories.

Contract amounts showed an increase in design contracts and some other miscellaneous categories. Costs for design contracts rose over the same period, and are expected to go higher in FY 1994, mostly due to freeway-based high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane design.

Other special contract categories expected to increase include the Freeway Service Patrol (about \$20 million); computer services, to cover the purchase of computer equipment needs related to MTA's new financial information system (\$4 million), and building maintenance contracts for work on Green Line facilities (about .5 million).

First Pasadena Line Contract Awarded

The MTA awarded Kiewit Pacific Co. a \$12.7 million contract for the demolition of a bridge crossing the L.A. River and construction of a new one for the planned Pasadena light rail line. Dismantling the old bridge will begin in early March and construction will continue once the old structure is completely removed.

"Demolition will be very delicate work," said Laurence Weldon, RCC's vice president/project manager for the Pasadena Blue Line project. "We will remove the foundation and the structure very carefully to avoid any damage to the river channel liner."

The structure will be built as a segmental bridge — a specialized method of bridge construction that avoids intrusion into the river channel underneath while building the new bridge.

Kiewit Pacific Co. who built the segmental bridges for the Green Line, was honored with engineering awards from Caltrans and the American Consulting Engineering Council for the Green Line segmental bridges.

Kiewit Pacific Co. was the lowest-priced responsive and responsible bidder and exceeded the Minority Business Enterprise and Women Business Enterprise participation with a bid commitment of 32.2% for MBE and 6.3% for WBE.

The Pasadena Line is a 13.6-mile light rail system connecting Union Station in downtown Los Angeles to Sierra Madre Villa Avenue in East Pasadena. As currently planned, the line will serve the communities of downtown Los Angeles, Mount Washington, Highland Park, South Pasadena and Pasadena.

85 Miles of HOV Lanes Approved

At meeting on Feb. 2, the MTA formally allocated \$315.9 million in capital funds for the continued construction of 85 miles of high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes on nine Southern California freeways over the next three fiscal years. The action is particularly important in light of the Jan. 17 earthquake that damaged a number of the county's key arteries.

Caltrans now has the green light to award multi-year construction contracts for HOV construction. The 85 new miles of HOV lanes received its first allocation of \$15 million last year.

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Briefly Speaking...continued

An Assortment of News and Information



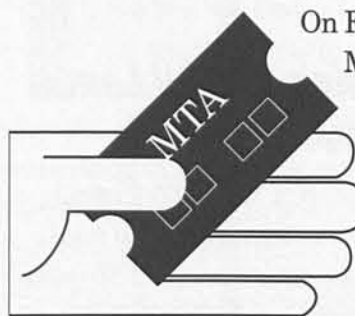
HOV makes a difference!

► Continued from page 5

As the county's principal funding transportation agency, the MTA must first commit the necessary funds to Caltrans for highway projects before construction contracts can be awarded. The funds come from a combination of local, state and federal sources, including 25% from Proposition C half-cent sales tax funds.

Caltrans must report to the MTA Board quarterly about HOV progress, and must obtain annual recertifications and funding approvals from the MTA for each project.

Free Ticket to Ride



On Feb. 3 the MTA began providing free monthly bus passes to qualified county residents who

were forced from their homes by the Northridge earthquake. The action was approved by the MTA board on Feb. 2.

"About 70% of those living in temporary or emergency shelters due to the earthquake already qualify for some kind of federal help," said the MTA's CEO Franklin White. "Many of these people were transit-dependent before the earthquake; hopefully, this will help them get back on their feet."

In an earlier action, the MTA board also voted to provide Metrolink passengers traveling from Santa Clarita and Moorpark a "2-for-1" monthly pass for February and March. The action provided riders in areas most affected by the earthquake the opportunity to buy a two-month Metrolink pass for the price of one month.

Monthly passes have been distributed to emergency shelters operated by the Red Cross and the Salvation Army in the San Fernando Valley and Hollywood areas. For information on the availability of monthly passes for those living in emergency shelters, contact MTA's Customer Relations Department at (213) 972-6235.

Forty Percent More Blue Line Parking

The MTA has added a total of 238 parking spaces at three Metro Blue Line stations in the Long Beach area. Together, the Del Amo, Willow and Wardlow stations will accommodate 840 vehicles.

A total of 148 parking spaces has been added at the Willow Station, increasing parking at this location by 58%. Most are just north of existing parking, but 38 spaces have been added along West American Avenue. At the Del Amo Station, 50 new parking spots were added on the north side of the lot, bringing the total to 364.

Parking at Wardlow Station more than doubled to a total of 73 when 40 parking spots were added to the 33 existing

striped spaces. The new parking area is located south of Wardlow Road on Pacific Avenue next to the Blue Line tracks

Smile -- You're Busted

Downtown L.A. drivers trying to beat the Blue Line will now have to pay for it. As part of a continuing safety program to reduce the number of accidents along the Metro Blue Line and save lives, the MTA has installed a camera at the intersection of Washington Boulevard and Los Angeles Street to photograph drivers illegally crossing the Blue Line tracks.




The system began electronically on Feb. 16, and will operate during regular Blue Line hours from 5 a.m. to 11 p.m. It is the final phase of a demonstration project conducted by the MTA, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, the Los Angeles Municipal Court and the Los Angeles Department of Transportation.

The camera takes two pictures, one when a car starts to cross the tracks and another after the violation. Imprinted on each photograph is the exact date, time, location and speed of the violating vehicle. The photo also records the length of time the signal was red before the driver proceeded into the intersection and triggered the camera.

"Motorists making left turns against a red arrow will be cited," said Captain Frank Vadurro, commander of the Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau. "Citations are issued when the photos show clearly the license plate and the driver of the vehicle." Drivers will receive a \$104 citation in the mail.

"Photo enforcement has been used as a demonstration project at the Compton Boulevard and Alondra Street Blue Line intersections, with excellent results," said Franklin White, chief executive officer of the MTA. "Once drivers were aware of the cameras, the number of violations dropped from one per hour to one every 12 hours during an 8-month study."

The MTA plans to install cameras permanently at selected Blue Line intersections, once the demonstration project is completed. Since the Blue Line began operations in 1990, there have been 211 collisions resulting in 22 fatalities and numerous injuries (as of Dec. 31, 1993). 

Exit Notes

Clinton Budget: How it Could Affect Transit

U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Frederico Pena released the transportation portion of President Clinton's proposed 1995 budget on Feb. 7. The good news is that it provides for a 4% funding increase; i.e., overall, transit is proposed to receive \$4.76 billion for fiscal year 1995, an increase of \$179 million over this year's budget. The bad news is that transportation agencies face drastic cuts in federal operating aid and in funding for new rail starts.

The President's budget recommendations would cut operating expense to all urban areas by \$202 million, from \$802 million this fiscal year to \$600 million, a 25% reduction. The budget also calls for a 40% cut under the Major Capital Investment Program, from \$668 million to \$400 million.

"I understand there have been concerns raised about [operating cuts]," said Pena. "The point I want to make is that for every transit agency in America, each of them will receive more funding because of the transit capital budget. This is an Administration that is committed to transit in America...we think the strategic way of doing it is by focusing our dollars on the capital side."

Federal Transit Administrator Gordon Linton, commenting on the proposed budget, said he's confident local and state gov-

ernments will help make up for the operating loss. The proposed budget must complete a series of further steps before it can become final, including approvals from both Congress and Senate.

*(The above information was excerpted from **Passenger Transport**, The Weekly Newspaper of the Transit Industry, Published by American Public Transit Association, Washington, D.C., Feb. 14, 1994.)*

Will L.A. Take to Mass Transit?

In the last few weeks, mass transit has provided a lifeline for auto-dependent commuters who were cut off from their work places by earthquake-damaged freeways. However, ridership began dropping after the first flush of panic ended.

It's happened before. BART retained about 20% of its new riders after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. Transit ridership doubled in Miami after Hurricane Andrew's devastation. And, in the Midwest, transit buses were literally life-savers during the Mississippi floods.

A *Los Angeles Times* editorial on Feb. 6 reported that "Not even the worst earthquake in modern Los Angeles history was enough to break up the romance of solitary Southern California drivers and their automobiles."

According to the editorial, 86% of the respondents in the Santa Clarita and San Fernando valleys to a *Times* poll said they do not plan to switch to mass transit or organize car or van pools. "This is unfortu-



A crowd in the station beats one on the road. Metro Red Line passengers heading for a ride on opening day.

nate," said the *Times*, "because success in coping with the Northridge quake depends on the use of more efficient transportation options."

Comments from the Big Apple

A *New York Times* editorial on Jan. 24 clearly championed L.A.'s mass transit cause. "Now, as Los Angeles recoups," it said, "local, state and federal authorities must resist rebuilding everything as it was before, only stronger. Rather, they must seize every chance they get to advance mass transit instead of pouring more concrete."

The editorial concludes with a dose of reality. "Los Angeles did not have its last earthquake on Monday, only its latest. Improved mass transit would help it cope with the next one."

Who knows what L.A. commuters will do in the long run. Meanwhile, recent events just may leave a lasting impression. **M**



The way it should be at Metrolink's Santa Clarita Station park-and-ride lot.

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