

Metro **QUARTERLY**

SPRING 2004

BUDGET CRISIS AHEAD
PREPARED TO STOP?

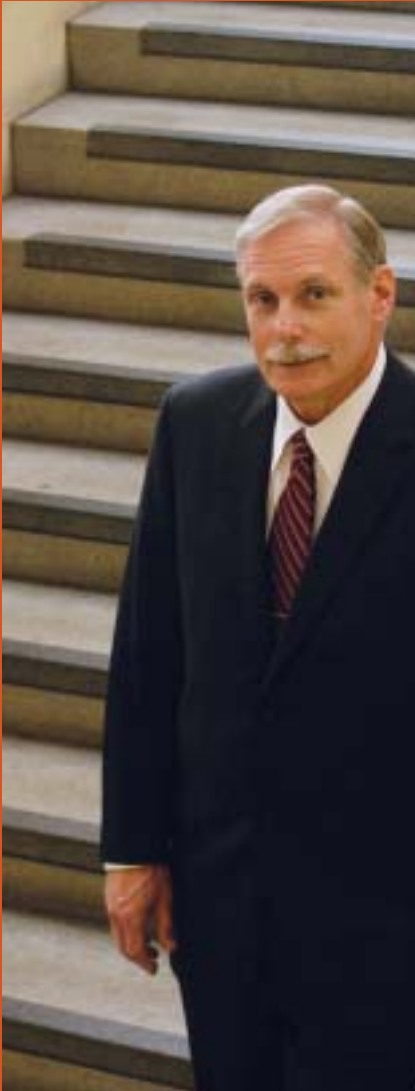


Metro

**Metro Fights For
LA County's Fair Share
Of Transit Funding**

Find Out How You Can Help

Chief Executive
Officer
Roger Snoble



Metro is navigating difficult financial straits as the flow of transportation funding from Sacramento and Washington, D.C. becomes more scarce. Still, it's not all doom and gloom by any means. In fact, it's an opportunity for Metro to craft new and better ways of moving people and goods. At the same time, we're exercising a leadership role in mobilizing Los Angeles County stakeholders to fight for the region's fair share of available transportation dollars.

Los Angeles County could lose as much as \$1 billion in state transportation funding in the next five years. Congress also is scrambling to find new monies for highway and mass transit projects against a backdrop of mounting federal budget deficits. That's the bad news.

The good news is key Metro projects are moving forward. Metro's Eastside light rail project has emerged as one of the Federal Transit Administration's top funding priorities, and the Metro Orange Line transitway in the San Fernando Valley is under construction.

Metro is taking delivery of 300 high-capacity buses. Two more Metro Rapid lines will debut on Soto and Vernon/La Cienega in June, and Metro is testing an exclusive bus lane on Wilshire Boulevard. Dozens of critical street and highway improvement projects also are pushing ahead, funded in large part by local transit sales tax dollars, which has been our mainstay during this fiscal crisis.

Investing in transit grows the economy and spurs more revenue for government at all levels. At the same time, getting more people to use public transit or try Metro rideshare programs eases traffic congestion and improves air quality.

We lay it on the line in this issue of Metro Quarterly, our progress and our fiscal challenges, and we'll tell you how you can help Metro sail safely through the tough times ahead.

*Sincerely,
Roger Snoble*

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MQ SPRING 2004

Published by
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MQ is the winner of first place
Adwheels Award presented by
American Public Transportation
Association.

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Metro is now testing exclusive bus lanes on Wilshire Boulevard.

Bus-Only Lanes Demonstration Underway On Wilshire Boulevard

The curbside lane on each side of Wilshire Boulevard between Federal and Centinela avenues is now designated as a bus-only lane.

Metro Rapid, Metro Local and municipal carriers are using the bus-only lanes, which are in effect during peak periods from 7 am to 9 am and from 4 pm to 7 pm.

The exclusive lanes improve the flow of traffic in adjacent lanes because vehicles are not slowed by bus boardings.

Cars may enter the lanes in off-peak periods or to make right turns at intersections or enter into parking lots.

The six month test may become a permanent feature. ●

“The exclusive bus lanes allow Metro Rapid buses to bypass traffic and move more people faster through the corridor.”

TIMOTHY PAPANDREOU, Metro Transportation Planning Manager



Exploring Metro Rapid Automation Technologies

Imagine riding a Metro Rapid bus that safely drives itself along a special lane of traffic.

All this will be possible with electronic guidance systems now being developed by the California Partners for Advanced Transit and Highways (PATH), a research program from the University of California, Berkeley. Metro is working with PATH and others on efforts to introduce these technologies for Bus Rapid Transit applications in LA County in the coming years.

A magnetic guidance system installed on the bus and embedded in the road precisely steers it. This allows the bus to keep a constant, safe distance from other buses in the same lane. The system automatically controls the rate of speed and lane changes and helps the bus nimbly maneuver the road.

The technology will help bus operators safely sustain higher speeds on arterial streets while traveling on tight, narrow lanes where most bus operators must reduce speeds to remain safe.

Bus operators would operate the bus under manual control while going to and from automated road sections.

“This technology and others hold promise for speeding service while not compromising safety,” says MTA Director of Regional Planning Rex Gephart. “We’re always on the lookout for technologies like these that will help improve the transit experience for our customers.” ●



Automated Bus Rapid Transit has been successfully demonstrated in San Diego. Transit vehicles can operate close together in an electronically-coupled “virtual train.”



Metro Transit Operations Supervisor Charles H. McMillan alerts bus operator trainee Vicki Osborne-Morton to simulated road hazard up ahead.

High-Tech Equipment Helps Train Drivers

New simulators and computer programs are sharpening the safety and customer service skills of Metro Bus operators.

During the six-week course for new operators, trainees must log a minimum of 20 hours behind the wheel and 15 hours of classroom instruction.

“Our obligation as an organization is to make sure we produce the best qualified bus operators in the world, especially when it comes to customer safety,” says Director of Metro Operations Training Mark Anderson. ●

Construction of the Metro Orange Line transitway is proceeding including the grading and paving of Chandler Boulevard between Tujunga and Whitsett avenues in North Hollywood.

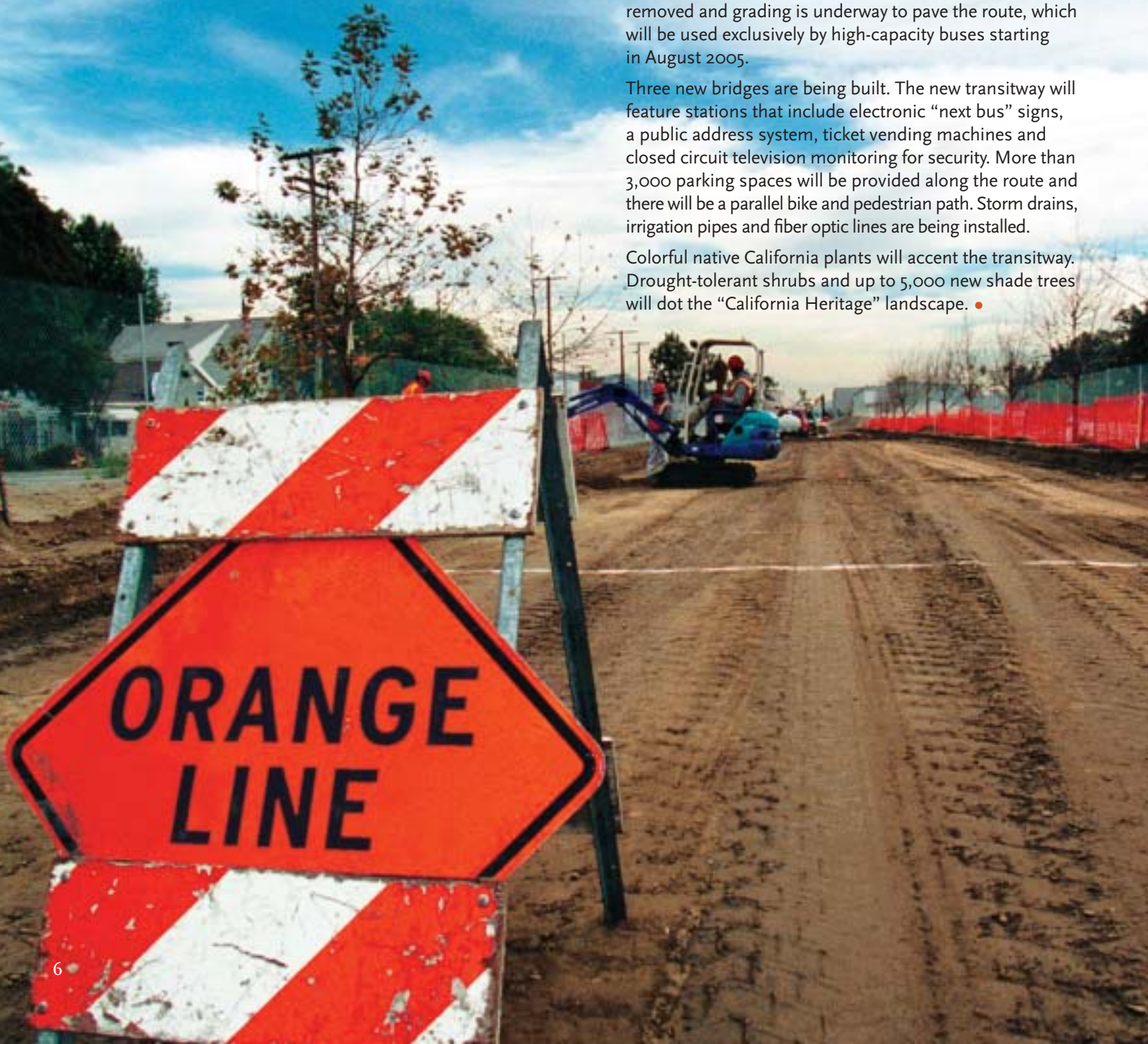
Metro Orange Line Transitway Construction Keeps Pace With Summer '05 Opening

The 101 Freeway in the San Fernando Valley is notorious for traffic bottlenecks, but relief is on the way. Starting August 2005 commuters will be able to bypass the 101 when the Metro Orange Line transitway debuts next year.

The 14-mile transitway follows the course of a former railroad right-of-way between the North Hollywood Metro Rail station and Warner Center. The tracks have been removed and grading is underway to pave the route, which will be used exclusively by high-capacity buses starting in August 2005.

Three new bridges are being built. The new transitway will feature stations that include electronic "next bus" signs, a public address system, ticket vending machines and closed circuit television monitoring for security. More than 3,000 parking spaces will be provided along the route and there will be a parallel bike and pedestrian path. Storm drains, irrigation pipes and fiber optic lines are being installed.

Colorful native California plants will accent the transitway. Drought-tolerant shrubs and up to 5,000 new shade trees will dot the "California Heritage" landscape. ●



Metro Faces I-710 Traffic Problems Head On

New alternatives for reducing traffic on the I-710 Long Beach Freeway will be unveiled this spring by a consortium of community, business leaders and elected officials. Goals of the 710 Freeway Corridor Study are to increase safety, reduce diesel emissions for health reasons, and sustain regional, state and national economic growth. The recommendations will be forwarded to various governments for action. The study covers an area from Long Beach to East Los Angeles.

The I-710 is heavily traveled by trucks that pick up freight from the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach and transport goods throughout the Los Angeles region and across the nation. An estimated 40,000 trucks ply the freeway each day and that number is expected to increase to more than 93,000 by 2020. The mix of so many trucks and heavy auto traffic has resulted in numerous major accidents that have resulted in many fatalities and traffic tie-ups.

Diesel truck emissions have increased the cancer risk for residents living in the freeway corridor where the carcinogenic risk exceeds 1,500 cases per million people. About 70 percent of the cancer risk is due to particulate emissions from trucks.

Shippers and commuters alike have an economic stake in fixing the I-710. The price of consumer goods could rise as truck traffic slows due to the increasing volume of traffic from the ports along with population growth. Likewise, commuters are wasting more time idling in traffic and that costs them money in terms of lost productivity and wasted gas. ●

“40,000 trucks ply the freeway each day and that number is expected to increase to more than 93,000 by 2020.”

Metro, the Gateway Cities Council of Governments, Caltrans and Southern California Association of Governments are reviewing ways of reducing traffic on the Long Beach Freeway.



LIMITED TRANSPORTATION FUNDING PUTS BIG SQUEEZE ON LA COUNTY

LA County taxpayers are being shortchanged more than \$200 million a year in state and federal transportation funding and that has hurt efforts to ease traffic congestion in LA County.

Metro has a solid plan for easing mobility today and in the future to keep up with the growing population. It is forging ahead with innovative projects that are beneficial to the region as a whole. The plan calls for heavy investment in new transportation infrastructure from street and freeway improvements to new bus and rail systems.

However, state and federal funding is not keeping pace. LA County businesses and residents pay \$1.436 billion annually in state and federal gas taxes but the county receives back less than \$1.2 billion. Compounding the funding gap are the budget deficits that the state Legislature and Congress are grappling with.



The state budget deficit will result in an estimated loss to LA County of \$330 million in fiscal year 2005 and as much as \$1 billion over the next five years.

The state and federal budget deficits and recent Consent Decree-mandated bus purchases will compromise Metro's ability over the next several years to deliver many much-needed transportation projects; projects that would have provided substantial congestion relief and measurable benefits to the region's air quality.

Among the repercussions, hundreds of transportation projects for which LA County and its 88 municipalities have applied for funding under Metro's bi-annual Call for Projects will face delays. Projects under this program can range from the widening of streets to the construction of freeway carpool lanes and other public transportation efforts.

Moreover, this year Metro has found itself in the unenviable position of having to suspend the Call for Projects for the first time in its history.

Metro's federal funding picture also is problematic, given the growing federal budget deficit. In addition, the region could lose substantial federal funding if it is unable to attain mandated air quality goals.

RALLYING LA COUNTY

Metro continues to seek ways to proceed with as many regionally significant transportation projects as possible. For example, last year the California Transportation Commission approved Metro's funding plan to continue construction of the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension and the purchase of rail cars for the line, Metro Orange Line Construction (a 14-mile transitway which will link the West San Fernando Valley to the Metro Rail North Hollywood Station), and the purchase of 200 60-foot articulated vehicles for operation on the region's busiest corridors.

At the same time, Metro is mobilizing the public to help fight for the county's fair share of state and federal transportation funding. (See sidebar stories, page 14.)

"Metro has long recognized the strong case Los Angeles County can make for funding when the region speaks to lawmakers in Sacramento and Washington, D.C. with one voice," says CEO Roger Snoble.

"The Mobility 21 coalition spearheaded by Metro, the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce and the Automobile Club of Southern California is serving as just such a vehicle as we seek solutions to the region's traffic congestion."

Snoble noted that congestion is not just a hardship for county residents who spend more than 90 hours each year idling in traffic at an annual cost of \$1,005 per person. The nation's economy depends on the free movement of freight from our ports. ●



"Metro has long recognized the strong case Los Angeles County can make for funding when the region speaks to lawmakers in Sacramento and Washington, D.C. with one voice."

ROGER SNOBLE, CEO



Metro: Doing More With Less

Already known as one of the most efficient transportation providers in the country, Metro continues to become even more industrious and has introduced a host of new programs that will benefit customers throughout the region despite the present budget squeeze.

LOCALIZING MANAGEMENT

In 2002, Metro decentralized bus operations into five smaller and more manageable business units, or service sectors, to bring the decision-making process closer to the people Metro serves.

MORE EFFICIENT ROUTING

By as early as 2005, Metro will implement a new bus route system called “Metro Connections.” Passengers will be delivered to destinations more quickly, by riding on buses that are part of an interconnected network of 15 to 18 regional connectors or hubs.

BETTER WAY TO PAY

Metro is about to enter a new era of convenient and seamless transit fares. Starting in early 2005, a plastic, wallet-sized TAP (Transit Access Pass) card will be introduced. Before boarding the Metro System, passengers will simply flash the card in front of fare-reading equipment, which will deduct the cost of the trip from the card. Use of the TAP card will speed up boardings and allow bus operators to focus more on driving safely.

This is Metro’s latest effort to create a countywide network of public transit services – a partnership of Metro and local municipal operators that can all be accessed by customers with one form of fare.

In January, Metro introduced the Day Pass. For only \$3, customers can travel an unlimited number of times, all day and night, on local Metro Bus lines, Metro Rapid and Metro Rail.

Metro also has expanded the reach and flexibility of those customers who use the buses of more than one transit agency. Created in 2002, the Regional EZ Transit Pass enables holders to board Metro Rail trains, Metro Buses and the buses of over a dozen municipal operators for one low monthly price.

To make it easier for customers to tell the difference between local, express and Metro Rapid service, Metro is repainting its buses in distinct color schemes.

LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY

Metro is probing the latest technological advances to maximize existing resources.

The Metro Bus fleet is being transformed into a motor pool of highly intelligent, quick-thinking coaches capable of generating a steady stream of real-time information to emergency personnel and planners. This information contributes to a

safer environment for drivers and passengers alike.

Motorola is overseeing the installation of an integrated wireless communications system called the Advanced Transportation Management System aboard each Metro Bus.

The computer programs HASTUS and MINIBUS are helping Metro make important bus planning decisions. Determining where buses must go, which operating division buses originate from and tracking changes in ridership patterns is made more efficient.

EXPANDING FLEET

To meet the needs of a rapidly growing population that wants to avoid crowded roadways and depends increasingly on public transit, Metro continues to refine and expand the Metro Bus System.

More than 420 peak-hour Metro Buses have been added since 1996. This has reduced the number of standees. During that time, Metro also has purchased more than 2,100 new clean-air, compressed natural gas (CNG) buses. Many have low-floors for easier access.

More new buses are on the way. Joining the Metro Bus fleet soon will be 45-foot CompoBuses with six more seats than standard buses and 60-foot vehicles that sport 20 more seats than standard buses. The buses are constructed of durable lightweight



materials that will result in better fuel economy. By the end of this year, Metro will provide its customers with nearly 300,000 extra hours of bus service.

Metro's newer bus fleet also will mean more reliable services because disruptions in service are fewer.

ADDING RAPID SERVICE

Passengers who ride Metro Rapid reach destinations up to 25% faster than on local service buses thanks to a bus signal priority system. It keeps green signals green up to 10 seconds longer or turns red signals green up to 10 seconds sooner to get buses through more intersections without stopping.

Metro Rapid has grown every six months since it debuted in June 2000. By 2008, the now seven-line Metro Rapid system is projected to expand into a 28-line network comprising nearly 415 route miles and 779 stations.

In 2005, the Metro Orange Line transitway will stretch from the North Hollywood Metro Red Line Station to Warner Center in the West San Fernando Valley.

EXPANDING METRO RAIL

Metro Rail's four interconnected rail lines now span 73.1 miles and the system is poised for additional growth.

The 13.7-mile Metro Gold Line that connects downtown Los Angeles and East Pasadena opened last July.

The line's Eastside Extension is expected to open in 2009, increasing the reach of Metro Rail to nearly 80 miles.

Moreover, Metro's use of design-build construction on the six-mile Eastside Extension is expected to save the agency between \$10 million and \$15 million.

Another barometer of a more efficient operation is that the per-mile cost of Metro Rail passenger subsidies continues to drop as the system grows. The per mile passenger subsidy for heavy rail is 30 cents and 41 cents for light rail. The per mile passenger subsidy for the Metro Bus system is 36 cents.

MAXIMIZING TAX DOLLARS

Since 2001, the Metro Treasury staff has refinanced nearly \$1.4 billion in outstanding bonds, issued to finance Metro Rail and Metrolink's purchases of rights-of-way, to take advantage of record low interest rates.

Over the life of the bonds, LA County taxpayers will now save more than \$208 million in interest costs with savings of \$11.9 million in this fiscal year alone.

Also in this time period, Metro has completed several innovative leasing transactions of Metro-owned real estate, rail cars and buses. These "defeased" leases have yielded \$69.8 million in new revenues. The proceeds from the leases are used in Metro's transit operating and capital programs.

POSITIONING FOR THE FUTURE

Metro continues to reinvent itself. Even in these uncertain financial times, Metro is not content to take a business-as-usual approach to service. Instead, Metro continues to up the ante and remains committed to meeting and exceeding the needs of its customers. •

“Metro continues to introduce a host of new programs that will benefit customers throughout the region.”



State Budget Crisis: An Opportunity for Transportation Planners

DAN BEAL, *Manager of Public Policy and Programs*
Automobile Club of Southern California

The proposed state budget takes more than \$2.1 billion from transportation – a cost that will not only stall projects that are ready to be built, but would impact the rebound of California’s fragile economy.

The state budget has already had an impact on Metro, as we’ve seen with the just-announced cancellation of the Call for Projects, a previously fully funded transportation capital improvements program that has a deferred list of over 80 projects amounting to \$600 million. The \$2.1 billion in proposed statewide cuts is on top of more than \$2.5 billion already taken from transportation over the past 18 months.

While the Automobile Club of Southern California and other transportation interests are vigorously opposing these cuts, there’s no doubt that at least some transportation funding will be diverted this year because of the state’s economic crisis. So the question becomes: Now what?

This setback can also be viewed as an opportunity for transportation planners and builders to renew their focus on what is truly vital to Southern California’s well-being: the ability to effectively move the

greatest amount of people and goods while using existing resources with the greatest efficiency possible.

By creating greater efficiency within our transportation systems, we will help save money on projects once funding becomes available again. And by directing limited funds to the most effective projects, our transportation investments will do more to return the state to fiscal health and to improve the lives of all Californians. We must allocate resources to both highway and transit projects offering the most mobility and safety benefits. Both roads and public transit are critical to the lives and well-being of Los Angeles area residents and workers.

ECONOMY ON THE LINE

The Mobility 21 effort launched by Metro and the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Auto Club and other groups, is taking on renewed importance during this crisis. Its approach toward building consensus can be valuable in increasing public awareness of transportation issues and possible solutions. It will play a vital role in securing Southern California’s fair share of resources from the reauthorization of the federal transportation act.

Meanwhile, those who advocate for transportation in Sacramento aren’t giving up the fight. The Auto Club is now working with Metro, the LA Area Chamber of Commerce and others to show state legislators how the continuing transportation cuts will harm not only transportation projects and agencies but also the economy as a whole.

Transportation projects are revenue producers that create companies, jobs and salaries and produce taxes that will be pumped back into the state’s battered economy. These jobs are not only for those directly employed by transportation construction but also for companies that become more profitable as a result of the improved infrastructure.

The constant reduction of transportation funding actually costs taxpayers more money. State Legislative Analyst Elizabeth Hill said in her analysis of the proposed state budget: “Such uncertainty (in transportation funding) makes long-term planning difficult, and money will be wasted in stopping and restarting projects.”

We hope lawmakers consider these facts in creating a final budget:



Long-Term Budget Impacts

JACK KYSER, *Chief Economist*
Los Angeles County
Economic Development Corporation



>For every \$1 that California spends on transportation, it receives a \$5.70 return in the form of job and business creation, increased business productivity resulting from reduced travel time, and reduced healthcare costs because of improved road safety and air quality.

>For every \$1 billion spent on transportation construction, the equivalent of 42,100 full-time jobs will be created. Those additional jobs will create additional sales tax, income tax and other revenue for California, bringing us closer to restoring fiscal health. Every new transportation construction job creates an additional 1.48 full-time jobs purchasing other goods and services in Southern California.

These benefits to the state economy will be seen immediately if California decides to push forward transportation construction projects that are ready to begin instead of forcing them to be delayed and, as a result, making them even more expensive to complete.

The short-term gains that seem to come from transportation budget cuts will have a long-term damaging effect not only on the quality of Californians' lives but also on their economic health. ●

The budget deficit confronting the State of California as well as the problems with the federal budget rate created lots of headlines. However, all the implications of these problems and their longer-term impacts on both residents and business are not being explored.

Consider the fact that Southern California already has a transportation “deficit” – our transportation infrastructure has not kept up with past growth in moving goods and people, and we are going to fall further behind.

In addition, the region’s population continues to grow at the rate of over 300,000 people per year while the economy is back on a growth track.

Two of the industries with the best prospects are international trade and tourism. This means more cars and trucks on our roadways and more demand for rail transportation.

But the state and federal budget problems mean little or no money for critical transportation projects. While the state’s money problems may disappear in a couple of years, the cuts in transportation funding will be impacting us for a long, long time. It will mean more time spent on the freeways, more missed deadlines for goods movement (with a resulting cost to business), and more air pollution caused by vehicles stuck in traffic jams.

According to the Texas Transportation Institute, traffic congestion already costs the LA area \$9 billion per year, and the total will grow.

The prospects are not pleasant. However, in the competition for funds between social programs and hard things like transportation, the former always wins. We need to think more creatively about funding our transportation needs. ●



Mobility 21: Fighting For Transportation Funding

Members of the Mobility 21 Coalition plan to visit state and federal lawmakers over the next several months to reinforce their unified message of restoring transportation funding for the region.

The Mobility 21 Coalition was formed in 2002 and is comprised of elected officeholders, transportation providers, business, labor officials, non-profit groups and private citizens who lobby the State of California and federal government for funding.

The Coalition recently approved a state budget resolution calling for the restoration of transportation funds, including Proposition 42 gasoline sales tax revenues, which voters approved in 2002 as monies to be used for transportation.


Combined, the state's mid-year budget reductions and the 2004-05 proposed budget include about \$2.1 billion in transportation funding cuts. To date, \$2.5 billion in transportation funds have already been lent to the state General Fund.

At the state level, the Coalition plans to oppose any additional transfers of transportation revenues to non-transportation purposes. These include funds in the state highway account, Proposition 42 revenues, federal transportation funds and funds in the public transit account.

In addition, the Coalition is supporting the implementation in LA County of an additional half-cent local sales tax for transportation purposes.

From May 15-19, Coalition members will travel to Washington, D.C. to meet with federal lawmakers to advocate in support of the reauthorization of LA County's transportation agencies' appropriations requests in the 2005 federal budget.

The group also will stress to lawmakers the importance of Metro's Full Funding Grant Agreement request for the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension.



INFORMATION, ADVOCACY TOOLS

For the latest updates on what is being done to secure more funding to ease traffic in LA County and how you can become involved, log on at www.mobility21.com.

The website is updated by Metro, the LA Area Chamber of Commerce and the Automobile Club of Southern California in support of the Mobility 21 transportation advocacy coalition.

Included on the website is information on the Mobility 21 Coalition's annual transportation summit, activities and events, legislative priorities and positions, member rosters, as well as press releases on the Coalition's lobbying activities and Metro's annual State of the Traffic report.

Plans are underway to augment the site with additional interactive features including outreach tools which can be used for advocacy efforts and grassroots organizing, links to other transportation and mobility-related organizations and an electronic press kit complete with a comprehensive overview of Mobility 21.

For the latest federal transportation updates, go to the American Public Transportation Association website at www.apta.com. •

Metro Is Much More Than Transit Operator

Metro projects help shape the landscape and the economy of Southern California.

Metro operates bus and rail service and provides funding for carpool lane construction and other street and highway improvements, bike path enhancements and freight delivery upgrades. Metro projects represent some of the largest construction efforts ever undertaken in the area.

FASTER BY THE MILE

Carpooling offers real benefits. In addition to saving money on gas and reducing pollution, carpoolers enjoy improved travel times, saving an average of one minute per mile. That's why Metro, working together with Caltrans, has planned, funded and built 435 miles of carpool lanes on LA freeways. Designed for vehicles carrying two or more people including vanpools and buses, carpool lanes reduce congestion by moving people more efficiently.

THE GOLDEN AGE RETURNS

Los Angeles and Pasadena reestablished their rail connection in the summer of 2003 as the Metro Gold Line opened. Serving Chinatown, Lincoln Heights, Mount Washington, Highland Park and South Pasadena, riders can reach their destinations much faster, including jobs, shops and entertainment, instead of idling away on congested freeways.

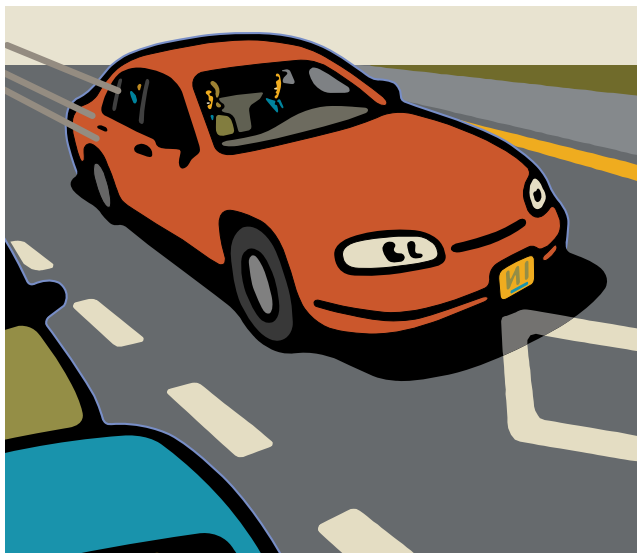


METRO TO THE RESCUE

The Metro Freeway Service Patrol helps stranded motorists by quickly removing stalled cars out of traffic. Tow truck drivers provide motorists with a wide range of quick fixes such as towing, changing tires and refilling radiators – all free of charge. The FSP assists 30,000 motorists each month.

THE NATION'S LARGEST CLEAN AIR FLEET

The Metro Bus fleet serves a 1,433-square-mile area. More than 1,800 new compressed natural gas buses have been acquired over the past five years, the largest clean air fleet in the nation. ●



PROJECT POSTERS

In the last edition of *Metro Quarterly*, readers enjoyed a preview of a new original poster series designed to capture the essence of Metro's larger projects and raise awareness of its wide range of services.

These illustrations are currently on display in Metro Rail trains and stations. The full series is available for purchase in the form of posters and postcards from the Metro Store. For information, call 213.922.4740.



Discretionary Riders Choose Metro Gold Line Instead of Driving



Backpackers prepare to board Metro Gold Line train bound for Union Station in downtown Los Angeles.

Metro Rail is disproving a belief held by many that the majority of transit users do not own cars.

Metro studies have shown that in recent years a large number of discretionary riders – car owners who use the transit system as an alternative to driving – have been riding Metro Rail.

Last year, a survey showed that nearly 50% of the respondents had automobiles available to them. The 1,000 survey respondents chose to use the train instead.

The Metro Gold Line, Metro's newest rail installment, may be following this trend. The Metro Gold Line stretches 13.7 miles from Los Angeles to East Pasadena, making stops at 13 stations.

"As traffic in Southern California increases each year, it's no surprise that some Los Angeles-area residents seek alternative modes of transportation," says CEO Roger Snoble.

LOOKING FOR A LIFESTYLE

Peter Capone-Newton, vice chairman for the Metro Westside/Central Governance Council, bought a house in Mt. Washington a year ago because of its close proximity to the Southwest Museum Station.

"I basically centered my search around the Metro Gold Line," he says. "I wanted to have a lifestyle in which I didn't have to be tied to a car."

Residing in a home just steps away from the station, Capone-Newton catches a train to Los Angeles, transfers to the Metro Red Line at Union Station in downtown Los Angeles and hops on a Metro Rapid that whisks him to his Beverly Hills office.

"As traffic in Southern California increases each year, it's no surprise that some Los Angeles-area residents seek alternative modes of transportation."

ROGER SNOBLE, CEO

"It blows my mind that I make two transfers and get on a bus and it takes the same amount of time if I used my car," he says. "It tells you how slow driving is."

Capone-Newton uses his weekdays on the Metro Gold Line to relax and catch up on the day's events by reading the newspaper. On weekends he uses the system to get to such local hot spots as Chinatown and Colorado Boulevard in Pasadena.

"I like to think of the line as something you can use for anything you want to do," he says. "You can stay out late and still take a train home."

Transit advocate Robert Velazques-Woo shares the same sentiments. The Arcadia resident has replaced the stress of driving the Santa Monica Freeway each morning with a relaxing train ride to work in downtown Los Angeles. "It's not as stressful as driving in traffic," he says.

The American Express vacation-planning representative was introduced to the services of public transportation at a young age when he lived overseas.

"I think it's much nicer to take the train and walk around," he says. ●

Eastside Rail Extension Grant Awaiting Federal Action

The Bush Administration is expected to decide soon whether to commit to Eastside Extension funding agreement.



Listing the project among its top funding priorities, the U.S. Department of Transportation recommended in February that Congress provide \$80 million for construction of the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension in Fiscal Year 2005.

The \$898 million Eastside Extension project, expected to open in 2009, is the MTA Board's highest priority rail construction project. Half the funding for the project will come

from local funding already secured by Metro.

The six-mile, eight-station light rail line will serve the eastern corridor from Union Station eastward to Atlantic Boulevard and include a twin 1.8-mile tunnel under Boyle Heights.

"We are pleased that U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta recognized the importance of this project," says CEO Roger Snoble. ●

Discover Chinatown on Metro Gold Line

Passengers are increasingly taking the train to enjoy the sights and sounds of the 300-acre Chinatown with its maze of shopping, dining, cultural sites and art galleries.

According to George Yu, executive director of the Chinatown Business Improvement District (BID), Chinatown restaurants, on average, are doing more business since the Metro Gold Line opened last July. There are 345 merchants, shops and restaurants in Chinatown.

The station is the first stop after leaving Union Station in downtown Los Angeles for the 36-minute trip to East Pasadena.

LARGE NEW YEAR'S TURNOUT

Yu and his associates estimated that 5,000 passengers arrived in Chinatown each day during the height of the "Year of the Monkey" revelry.

He credits the 13.7-mile light rail line with making the most recent Chinese New Year celebration the largest in memory.

About 60,000 people attended the famous Chinese New Year's Parade, 10,000 more than before the Metro Gold Line.

"It was overwhelming," says Yu. "I walked through Chinatown during the evening hours and the amount of people traffic was tremendous. Merchants were happy and understand the value of the Metro Gold Line. It was really noticeable."

Ken Poon, general manager of the bustling Empress Pavilion restaurant, can easily keep track of Metro Gold Line passengers when they come into his restaurant for the first time.

"When I strike up a conversation with them they show me their train tickets and tell me they're from Pasadena," he says. "Many new people are coming in, especially for dinner. The whole area is better off than before." •

To request a copy of the Angels Walk Chinatown self-guided tour booklet, call 213.922.7023.

For a copy of the "Gold Line Guide to Chinatown Restaurants," written by former LA City Councilmember Michael Woo, contact the Chinatown BID at 213.680.0243.

In one of Chinatown's main courtyards near Hop Louie restaurant, friends chat outside popular jazz club.





TAP Card Promises Faster Way To Travel

Metro System users will feel like Fred Astaire and Ginger Rodgers as they TAP their way from one bus and rail system to another with their TAP cards in hand. The scheduled introduction of the Transit Access Pass in early 2005 is Metro's effort to create a super network of LA County public transit services that can all be accessed by customers with one form of fare.

Embedded with computer chips, the plastic, wallet-sized TAPs will be programmed by Metro Customer Centers to hold the equivalent of current weekly, bi-weekly or monthly Metro passes and cash amounts.

Before boarding a bus or train, passengers will wave the card in front of electronic fare-reading equipment to validate the pre-paid fare. There is no need to remove a card from a purse or jacket to pay a fare, which will speed up boardings.

In addition to Metro, TAP participants will include municipal carriers, paratransit and Metrolink.

"The cards represent one of the most ambitious and important customer service projects ever undertaken by Metro and will gradually be phased in," says CEO Roger Snoble. "All other forms of fare media will be accepted through the transition to TAP."

Metro employees will test the cards this summer on the Metro Gold Line and 200 Metro Buses that operate in the San Gabriel Valley. ●

Monetary Incentive Helps Metro Recruit Vanpoolers

New Metro vanpool riders are reimbursed \$100 if they remain in the program for at least 30 days.

Of the 4,000 commuters who have tried vanpools, 98% continued after the 30 days elapsed.

The benefits of ridesharing include less congested streets and highways, improved air quality, lower gasoline expenses and rested commuters.

"Since I started vanpooling I arrive at work relaxed," says City of Santa Clarita Valley resident Anabelle Kennedy.

"Vanpooling has made my life less stressful and helps me save money on gas," says Christopher Weaver of Santa Clarita.

For information on all Metro vanpool plans, call 1.800.COMMUTE and select option 3. ●

Bike to Work Day Set for May 20

Metro is promoting the Los Angeles region's 10th annual Bike to Work Day Thursday, May 20, by offering prizes to those who register online before that day and pledge to ride their bike to work or school. A new commuter bike, bike accessories and other prizes will be awarded to bicyclists who register at metro.net/biketowork.

With gas prices surging, Metro is encouraging commuters to try bicycling. As a further incentive, Metro will offer free rides on its buses and trains to bicyclists all day May 20 if they board with their bicycle and/or bicycle safety helmet.

For more information on Bike to Work Day and Metro supported bike programs, go to metro.net or call (213) 922-2811. ●

MTA Planning Manager John Stesney, a self-described "bike nut" since he was a teenager, rides his bike from his home in Encino to Metro headquarters in downtown Los Angeles. The 22-mile trip takes one hour and 15 minutes.





New General Manager Alex Clifford, 44, joined Metro three years ago.

Gateway Cities Has New General Manager

Alex Clifford is the new general manager of the Gateway Cities Service Sector. Clifford has worked 3 years in the operations division.

He served eight years as a member of the Riverside County Transportation Commission, twice as chairman. He represented the commission as a member of the Southern California Regional Rail Authority and served as its chairman for two years.

For eight years, he also served as a board member of the Riverside Transit Agency. In addition, he was a member of the Intercity Rail Joint Powers Authority and the California/Nevada Super Speed Train Commission, among others. •



◀ Marge Hearn is joined by the tv broadcast team of (L-R) Paul Sunderland and Stu Lantz at Metro Rail station plaque that honors her husband.

Metro and LA Lakers Honor Play-By-Play Man Chick Hearn

The Pico Metro Blue Line Station is dedicated to the memory of the late legendary Lakers basketball announcer Chick Hearn.

A plaque honoring Hearn has been installed at the station, chosen for its close proximity to the Lakers' home at Staples Center.

“For more than four decades, Chick Hearn brought millions of people together throughout Southern California through their love of the Lakers,” says Lakers General Manager Mitch Kupchak. “He had such a huge impact on this city that it is a very fitting tribute for Metro to honor him in this way. As the many passengers who travel through this station see his plaque on a daily basis, it will keep his memory alive in a very positive way.”

Hearn broadcast 3,339 consecutive games during one span. •



Even before the new cleanliness policy was approved, all Metro vehicles frequently received a thorough wash.

New Cleanliness Policy Will Keep Metro Spotless

The lyrics of a 1950s song –“Take out the papers and the trash” – resonates with Metro.

The MTA Board has approved an aggressive new Metro Cleanliness Policy that sets high standards for making sure Metro Buses, Metro Rail trains, bus stops, stations and all other Metro facilities are free of graffiti and vandalism.

“Metro is committed to creating and maintaining the cleanest public transit environment possible for our customers,” says Deputy CEO John Catoe. “There is nothing more important than the safety and comfort of our customers.”

The new standards include a measurable increase in the level of cleanliness for all Metro property and stringent vehicle inspection ratings.

Metro will continue to work with its law enforcement partners, communities, schools, business owners and other public entities to help prevent and remove graffiti as quickly as possible. •



1930



2004

Third Street & Broadway

(L) An LA Railway streetcar shares Broadway and 3rd Street with cars during Christmas 1930. The headquarters of the LA Times and Victor Clothing Co. once were located on 3rd Street. (R) Metro Local and South Broadway Metro Rapid Line 745 service the area today.



1956



2004

Willow Crossing

(L) In 1956, Pacific Electric's Big Red Car #411 heads toward downtown Long Beach as it crosses Willow Street to operate in the middle of Long Beach Boulevard. (R) Metro Blue Line trains pass by the same spot today just south of the Metro Rail Willow Station.



1958



2004

Rimpau Circle

(L) Pico and Rimpau boulevards in 1958 were the termination point for the P Line streetcar, the old MTA's heaviest used line. (R) The Santa Monica Big Blue Bus runs near the intersection today.

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