

MTA Considers Bus Schedule Changes as Demonstration Snarls El Monte Busway Traffic

(Jan. 24) With traffic in the El Monte Busway grinding to a halt during recent rush hour periods, MTA schedulers will be watching bus running times over the next several weeks to see whether they should make adjustments to bus schedules.

The rush-hour delays began earlier this month following the start of an 18-month demonstration project in which use of the busway was expanded from transit buses and three-person carpools to include two-person carpools. Busway lanes run in each direction along the San Bernardino Freeway between the LA Civic Center and El Monte.

Traffic slowed dramatically

According to the Los Angeles Times, Caltrans officials reported that traffic on the busway has slowed dramatically with the thousands of additional vehicles. The 15-minute trip between El Monte and downtown LA now often takes twice that long. Officials say traffic actually can move faster in the regular freeway lanes.

"It's too early for us to have much data, other than scattered reports from operators about delays," says Dana Woodbury, deputy executive officer, Planning. "If delays persist, some adjustments to schedules and/or timetables will be necessary."

The demonstration project is required by legislation passed last year. Residents and civic leaders in the San Gabriel Valley had complained that freeway lanes were clogged while the busway moved freely. It will end July 1, 2001.

Four MTA bus lines

The MTA, which operates four bus lines and carries nearly 7,000 passengers each day on the busway, opposed the bill. Foothill Transit operates 454 buses on the busway each weekday and carries some 18,000 passengers.

Prior to the demonstration project, cars and buses on the busway moved some 7,000 people an hour into downtown LA during peak hours. The freeway's four other traffic lanes, combined, moved 7,600 people per hour during rush periods.

[Back to MTA Report](#)