



The ATSAC center beneath City Hall East reminds a visitor of the MTA's Rail Operations Control center at Imperial/Wilmington.

Fiber Optics Link with LADOT is Key to MTA's Metro Rapid Bus Control Center

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(April 10) A span of fiber optic cable being laid beneath the streets of Los Angeles soon will connect the MTA with the LADOT's Automated Traffic Surveillance and Control (ATSAC) center. It's a link that will be essential to the efficient operation of the Metro Rapid bus program.

With the connection established, the MTA can set up a satellite of the city's ATSAC. The new system will give Bus Operations Control (BOC), located on the sixth floor of MTA Headquarters, virtually the same command over Metro Rapid buses that Rail Operations Control has over the subway and light-rail systems.



Up and running by mid-May

"We anticipate the system will be up and running by mid-May," says Rex Gephart, the MTA project manager. "We'll start training transportation operations supervisors to run it at about the same time."

Noting that Metro Rapid service is due to begin June 24, the same day as the opening of the Metro Red Line's North Hollywood line, Gephart says, "Four TOSs will be dedicated to the system in order to provide 20 hours a day of observation and service - on about the same hours as the Metro Red Line."

The key to successful Metro Rapid operation will be maintaining a strict three-to-10-minute headway - depending upon time of day and route - between buses from one end of the line to the other.

Currently, buses are scheduled to arrive at and depart stops on a "time point-based" schedule.

To maintain the proper headway, BOC must know where each rapid bus is as it moves along the route.

A four-screen display

The TOSs will monitor Metro Rapid movements via a four-screen display to be mounted on the west wall of BOC. One screen will display the stops and intersections along the 26-mile Whittier/Wilshire corridor; while another will display the 16-mile Ventura Boulevard corridor.

Electronic loops buried in the street will signal the BOC as a rapid bus passes over it. Each bus will be presented as a small icon that will blink yellow and then red if a bus gets too close or lags too far behind its leader. When BOC recognizes such a situation, a TOS will radio the out-of-sequence bus to widen or close the gap.

The third and fourth screens can be used to monitor traffic movements and any delays that might occur along the two routes. One screen will be able to display a real-time graphic illustration of a selected intersection, showing the changing signal lights and traffic movement. The other screen will show real-time views of any of the 130 strategic intersections where ATSAC has mounted a TV camera.

See metro.net
January 7:
"Rapid Bus
Project Shifts
into Top Gear"

Experimenting with the system

Although the system hasn't yet been installed in BOC, a visitor to the city's facility can observe Metro Rapid movement along the Whittier/Wilshire and Ventura boulevard corridors. The MTA has been experimenting with the system by placing transponders on a number of regular Metro Bus coaches.

Watching the bus icons as they inch across the screen provides only a hint of the much larger, complicated project.

By the start of Metro Rapid service in June, several hundred operators and a half-dozen TOSs will be involved along with 100 specially painted, low-floor CNG coaches and an extensive array of computers and electronic equipment. And it all will be aimed at getting the patron to his or her destination more quickly and efficiently than ever.

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