

Communities Must Create Safe Pedestrian Areas to Make Transit Systems Work, Group Told



From left: Bob Cashin, deputy executive officer, Countywide Planning; MTA Board Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, and Diego Cardoso, Countywide Planning director, address the MTA Pedestrian Symposium. PHOTOS BY BILL HEARD.

(June 1) Communities must recognize that the people who use mass transit systems must be able to walk safely en route to their destinations. That was the message Los Angeles County Supervisor and MTA Board Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke had today for those attending a pedestrian symposium at MTA Headquarters.

"Pedestrian deaths in Los Angeles were the highest in California," Burke said, noting that some 1,100 children have been killed in recent years. She said the MTA has taken the lead in improving walking areas by providing funding for projects in Los Angeles, Santa Monica and Long Beach.

Quality of life improved

Crime is lower when cities provide safe areas where people can walk and quality of life is improved, she said, adding, "We must look at the pedestrian as a forum for our planning."

Almost 100 representatives of various city and county agencies and community organizations participated in the symposium. Speakers included local transportation officials and the author of a book on walking.

Robin Blair, an MTA transportation planning manager whose responsibility includes pedestrian and urban design, presented a draft of the pedestrian elements of the agency's Long-Range Transportation Plan and led a discussion of the plan.

The MTA provides some \$12 million annually for pedestrian and bikeway projects, according to Blair. He said bus and rail transportation cannot work properly without a strong pedestrian element. "There's a limit to how far people will walk in a miserable environment," he said.

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