

## Metro Report Archives

### July Articles

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**Davis OKs \$6.8 Billion [Transportation Package](#) with Funds for MTA Buses, LA Light-Rail Projects** (July 7) Gov. Gray Davis has signed a \$6.8 billion package of transportation measures that includes funding for hundreds of new buses and two light-rail projects in Los Angeles.

**Survey Shows 'It's [Getting Better](#) on the Bus,' But Indicates Improvements Still Needed** (July 10) A recently completed customer satisfaction survey of Metro Bus patrons in five geographic areas of Los Angeles County indicates that 65 percent of those questioned agree that, "It's getting better on the bus."

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| <p>IN MEMORIUM<br/><b>Pat Williams</b><br/><b>Retired Transit Operations Employee</b></p>  |
| <p>Pat Williams, a retired Transit Operations employee died Thursday, July 6th, after a long illness. Services were held Sunday, July 9, in Nevada. If anyone wishes to send their condolences to Pat's husband and family, cards or notes may be sent to: Larry Williams, One Jackson Lane, Yerington, NV 89447</p> |

**NEW! MTA to Celebrate Metro [Blue Line 10th](#) Anniversary with Spirit of the 'Red Car'** (July 13) In celebration of the return of rail service to Los Angeles, MTA will join elected officials, Friday, July 14, to mark the 10th anniversary of the Metro Blue Line.

**Channel 35 to Air [NoHo Opening Video](#), July 10-17** The success of the grand opening event for the Metro Red Line extension and Metro Rapid bus was caught on tape! The 11 minute video will be aired on L.A. CityView Channel 35, Monday through Friday from July 10 to July 17. It will be shown six times a day beginning at 9 a.m.

**Rail Chief's Observations Suggest [Commuting Patterns](#) are Changing** (July 11) The opening of the Metro Red Line's North Hollywood extension appears to be changing some commuting patterns in unexpected ways. And the MTA's Rail Operations chief says the rail system "is forming a high-capacity transit backbone that we haven't seen before."

**[Disabled Patrons](#) and Personal Attendants Will Ride Metro System Free Starting Sept. 1** (July 12) Beginning Sept. 1, some disabled persons and their personal care attendants will begin riding Metro Bus and Metro Rail lines for free. It's part of a two-year demonstration program aimed at giving disabled patrons more transit options and saving some \$1.6 million a year by encouraging them to use fixed-route transit instead of more expensive curb-to-curb paratransit services.

**Metro Operators [Pressed into Service](#) to Help Crowds Using NoHo, Universal City Stations** (July 13) Transit Operations this week pressed into service a team of Metro operators and customer service agents to help handle crowds of commuters flocking into the Metro Red Line's North Hollywood and Universal City stations during morning rush periods.

**['Red Car' Debut](#) on Metro Blue Line Marks 10th Anniversary of Metro Rail** (July 14) With the sound of a familiar "e-tone" horn announcing its departure, a modern-day Pacific Electric "Red Car" took its first passengers on a nostalgic ride following ceremonies marking the 10th anniversary of Metro Rail.

**['Express Yourself'](#) Essay Contest Winner Spends Time Saved with His Daughter** (July 14) A panel of judges has declared a 48-year-old Woodland Hills father who "feels compelled to write about subjects he feels strongly about" as winner of the MTA's "Express Yourself and Win" essay contest. The competition encouraged riders to explain how Metro Rail saves them time.

**[Universal City Station](#) Rose to 5th Place Following NoHo Extension Opening** (July 18) With the Metro Red Line's arrival in the San Fernando Valley, June 24, the Universal City station immediately took its place as the fifth most heavily used station on the 16-station subway system.

**[MTA's Marching Orders](#): Find Parking Relief for Subway Riders** (July 19) The Board's Operations Committee gave the MTA staff "marching orders," Wednesday, to provide parking relief for patrons at the Metro Red Line's North Hollywood and Universal City stations.

**[El Monte Busway](#) Reverts to 3-Person Carpool Lane, July 24** (July 19) Beginning Monday, July 24, three-person carpools once again will be required on the El Monte Busway – at least during the weekday peak commuting hours of 5 - 9 a.m. and 4 - 7 p.m.

**UPDATED, JULY 20: JULY BOARD ITEMS... Harbor Transitway Service, DNC Buses on [Committee Agendas](#); Board Sets Special Meeting** (July 17) MTA Board committees this month will consider motions that include offering all-day express bus service on the Harbor Transitway and providing 100 coaches for use during the Democratic National Convention in August. A special Board meeting also is scheduled at 11:30 a.m., Thursday, July 20.

**[MTA Testing Device](#) Designed to Prevent Rear Wheel Runovers, Save Lives** (July 20) The MTA is testing a device designed to avoid injuries and save lives by preventing passengers or pedestrians from being

run over by the rear wheels of a bus.

### **Judge Extends [‘Cooling-Off’ Period](#) in MTA, Union Contract**

**Talks** (July 25) A Superior Court judge today extended the "cooling-off" period in the MTA's negotiations with its three major labor unions. The injunction now expires at 12:01 a.m., Sept. 5.

### **Operator, Mechanic [Volunteers Train](#) for Democratic**

**Convention Service** (July 25) Metro Bus operators and mechanics - 138 in all - who volunteered to provide bus service during the Democratic National Convention, Aug. 14-17, are attending the first sessions of a three-phase training course designed to ready them for the event.

### **MTA, Kaiser Open [Subway Entrance to Hospital](#) at**

**Vermont/Sunset** (July 25) The MTA and Kaiser-Permanente on Monday opened the Kaiser-Permanente Portal at the Metro Red Line's Vermont/Sunset station. The new entrance that will offer better, easier access to Kaiser's medical facilities located at the northwest corner of Sunset and Vermont.

**MTA Employees Marvelous on ["Modern Marvels"](#)** (July 25) Former Houston Oilers wide receiver/running back Ed Tanner, who now drives Metro Buses out of Division 18, will be featured along with Gary Spivack of Transit Operations and Rex Gephart of Transit Planning on the History Channel series "Modern Marvels." The episode will be aired Thursday, July 27, at 10 p.m.

### **Artifacts from Subway's [Chinatown Dig on Display](#) at Autry**

**Museum** (July 26) Artifacts from LA's Old Chinatown that were recovered during construction of the Metro Red Line are on display at the Autry Museum of Western Heritage in a newly opened exhibit entitled, "On Gold Mountain: A Chinese American Experience."

### **[MTA to Reroute](#) 17 Bus Lines, July 29, for Democratic**

**Convention** (July 26) The MTA plans to reroute 17 Metro Bus lines serving downtown Los Angeles near the Staples Center, beginning July 29, to accommodate street closures and detours around the Democratic National Convention (DNC) site.

### **[Board Votes](#) to Expand Harbor Transitway Service; Approves**

**100 Buses, Crews for Demo Convention** (July 27) The MTA Board voted, Thursday, to expand Metro Bus service on the Harbor Transitway and approved a staff recommendation to provide 100 buses with operators and maintenance crews for the Democratic National Convention in August.

### **FTA Adding MTA's Metro Rapid Project to Nationwide Bus**

**[Rapid Transit Consortium](#)** (July 28) The Federal Transit Administration is adding the MTA's Metro Rapid system to its nationwide consortium of Bus Rapid Transit systems.

## **1 Million Metro Red Line Boardings in 7 Days Boosts Average Daily Rail Ridership**

(July 3) From its opening weekend through the first five days of revenue service on the North Hollywood line, the Metro Red Line transported more than one million passengers. That achievement signaled a sharp boost in total Metro Rail ridership that planners believe will continue in the months ahead.

In its first week of revenue service, Metro Red Line average daily ridership rocketed by 85 percent to 120,500 from a daily average of 65,150 in May, according to Ashok Kumar, director, Countywide Planning's Operations Data Analysis.

Ridership this past week also jumped by five percent on the Metro Blue Line to an estimated 63,000 and by 10 percent on the Metro Green Line to an estimated 27,500. During the opening weekend of North Hollywood service, the Metro Red Line recorded 500,000 boardings as crowds celebrated the arrival of subway service in the San Fernando Valley.

The spike in average daily subway ridership brings all Metro Rail daily boardings to a total of 211,000 - 15 percent of all boardings on MTA-operated transit lines. Metro Bus boardings average 1.2 million each day.

### **Heavier evening ridership**

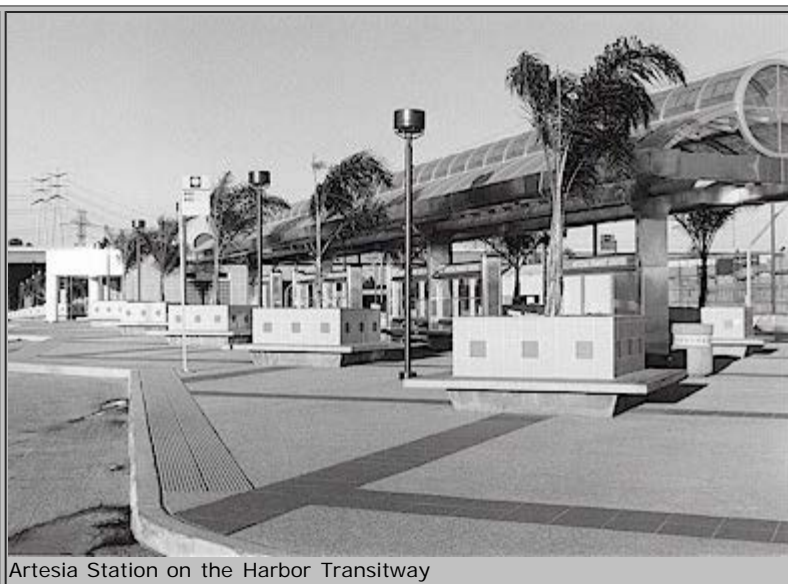
Checks indicate that the Hollywood and North Hollywood portions of the Metro Red Line are drawing heavier ridership in the afternoons and evenings than during traditional rush periods. Kumar attributes that to activity at the entertainment venues located in those areas.

"We're getting good ridership even in the late evenings near close of service," he said.

No ridership figures for Metro Rapid bus service along the Wilshire/Whittier and Ventura Boulevard corridors are available yet. The first week of service, which began with the North Hollywood opening, was free. Monday was the first day of revenue service on the two lines.

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## Plan to Increase Harbor Transitway Use Includes More Service, Reduced Fares



Artesia Station on the Harbor Transitway

(July 5) The MTA wants to greatly expand Metro Bus ridership on the under-utilized Harbor Transitway by offering all-day service and reduced fares as incentives to attract new riders and to encourage some rail passengers to switch to the bus. The Board will be asked at its July 27 meeting to approve a six-month demonstration of the revised service.

A plan devised by Countywide Planning would have the upgraded service starting Sept. 5 in conjunction with the opening of Transitway stations at Carson Street and Pacific Coast Highway, the southernmost of eight bus stations on the freeway.

Line 445, which currently operates three northbound morning runs and four southbound evening runs, would be expanded to provide some 18,000 new service hours by operating every 30 minutes during peak periods and every hour during off-peak periods, evenings and weekends. Service would be offered from approximately 5 a.m. until 10 p.m. each day.

### Council offers marketing help

"This is a step in the right direction," says Rod Goldman, the transportation planning manager working on the project. "We'll be working with the South Bay Council of Governments to encourage ridership. They've offered their help with targeted marketing in local newspapers."

If approved by the Board, fares for passengers traveling between downtown and the Harbor Transitway station at the I-105 would be reduced by \$1 from the current \$2.35 to \$1.35. Those boarding at either Carson Street or PCH for downtown would pay \$1.85 instead of \$3.35 - a \$1.50 savings. Travel between San Pedro and downtown would be reduced by \$1 from \$3.35 to \$2.35, reflecting a reduction from four freeway zones to two.

Fare reductions would apply not only to Line 445, but also to lines 442, 444, 446, 447 and Line 550, created in 1998 to provide service to area hospitals. The MTA presently serves about 2,500 daily Transitway riders

### Provide incentives to riders

One anticipated effect of reducing fares - in addition to encouraging new ridership - would be to relieve pressure on the overcrowded Metro Blue Line by providing an incentive for many Metro Green Line riders to use Harbor Transitway buses for direct downtown service.

A patron who commutes into downtown LA via the Metro Green Line and

Metro Blue Line pays only \$1.60. Under the proposal, a Metro Green Line patron would pay \$1.60 - instead of the current \$2.60 - to complete his or her trip into downtown on a Transitway bus.

The cost of operating the proposed service is estimated to be \$1.26 million. Loss of revenue from eliminating two express increments is estimated at \$488,000, although that is expected to be offset by a gain of \$225,000 in revenue from new riders attracted to the expanded Transitway service.

#### **Board concerned about ridership**

"We had expected this and put money in the MTA budget for upgraded service," says Goldman. He noted that the Board has been concerned about low ridership on the Transitway.

The MTA will monitor Harbor Transitway service during the demonstration project to determine whether it meets at least 50 percent of the minimum standard for boardings per revenue hour for express services.

The Harbor Transitway, built by Caltrans, was completed in August, 1996. It runs along the median of the Harbor Freeway between Artesia Boulevard in Gardena north to Adams Boulevard in Los Angeles. At present, Metro Bus Line 445 and LADOT Line 448 are the only express lines operating on the Transitway. Expanding service was a key recommendation of the MTA's South Bay/Gateway Transit Restructuring Study.

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## Court Issues Restraining Order Preventing Strike, Lockout; Sets Hearing for July 25

(July 6) A Superior Court judge issued a temporary restraining order, today, preventing an immediate strike by transit unions or a lockout of union workers by the MTA. The judge scheduled a July 25 hearing at which she is expected to extend the injunction for the full 60 days allowed by law.

Judge Dzintra Janavs' action will bring the parties back to her court in 19 days for an update on negotiations. If she issues the expected injunction, it will extend the cooling off period through Sept. 3.

**LINK TO  
MTA  
STATEMENT:  
COOLING  
OFF PERIOD  
ORDERED  
IN MTA  
LABOR  
CONTRACT  
TALKS**

"The MTA appreciates the action taken by Gov. Gray Davis to secure a court order..., " the MTA said in a statement released today. "The MTA is hopeful in the next two months it can reach agreements with its major labor unions...The governor's intervention gives us more time, but does not let anyone off the hook."

### Contracts expired June 30

A two-month reprieve would take negotiations past the Democratic National Convention, scheduled to be held in Los Angeles, Aug. 13-17. Contracts with the UTU, ATU and TCU expired at midnight, June 30. Members of the UTU and ATU have authorized their leaders to call a strike.

Davis convened a special Board of Investigation, June 29, to look into the MTA's labor situation. In a July 5 letter to Atty. Gen. Bill Lockyer, Davis said a report issued by the Board "make(s) clear that a strike or lockout will significantly disrupt public transportation service and endanger the public's health, safety, or welfare."

The Board's report said a transit strike would "...disproportionately affect...poor and minority communities...MTA estimates that it will lose as much as \$1 million per day during a strike, the downtown business district will lose \$1.5 million per day, and MTA employees and vendors will lose at least an additional \$1 million...In addition, MTA estimates that the environment will see an increase of 65 tons of additional pollution each day."

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## **Davis OKs \$6.8 Billion Transportation Package with Funds for MTA Buses, LA Light-Rail Projects**

(July 7) Gov. Gray Davis has signed a \$6.8 billion package of transportation measures that includes funding for hundreds of new buses and two light-rail projects in Los Angeles.

At a ceremony, Thursday, in San Francisco, Davis signed AB-2928 and SB-406, bills that authorize the six-year transportation improvement program.

Together, the bills provide funding for the purchase of 385 new buses for the MTA, as well as funding for the 13.7-mile Pasadena Blue Line and for a 10-mile light-rail line from Union Station through East LA to Monterey Park.

Drawing revenue from state gasoline sales taxes and funds from the state's budget surplus, the program will provide about \$2 billion the first year and about \$1 billion over the next five years for transportation improvements.

### **Southern California projects**

Southern California transportation projects include \$5 million for an environmental report and expansion study of the Route 57 toll road in Orange County and the addition of high-speed ferry service between San Diego and Oceanside.

The governor also approved \$245 million for transit projects in the San Fernando Valley. The legislation calls for \$145 million to be earmarked for an east-west corridor Bus Rapid Transit project along the Chandler right-of-way, consistent with the MTA's request for this corridor. AB-2928 also sets aside \$100 million for a north-south Bus Rapid Transit project that interfaces with the Chandler corridor project.

Among other projects included in the funding are expanded service on BART and a \$4 billion project to extend the commuter rail line to San Jose. Plans also call for spending \$538 million to extend San Francisco's Muni light rail line to Chinatown.

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## **Survey Shows 'It's Getting Better on the Bus,' But Indicates Improvements Still Needed**

(July 10) A recently completed customer satisfaction survey of Metro Bus patrons in five geographic areas of Los Angeles County indicates that 65 percent of those questioned agree that, "It's getting better on the bus."

Surveyors completed 538 phone interviews with regular riders on 10 lines serving downtown Los Angeles, Hollywood/West Side, South-Central LA and the San Fernando and San Gabriel valleys. A typical rider on these lines is almost completely transit-dependent, with almost half having no access to a vehicle, while two-thirds have no valid drivers license.

Significant percentages of those surveyed said they have noticed improvements in important areas of bus service and 41.6 percent gave the system a better overall evaluation. More than half believe exterior bus cleanliness has improved and 46.9 percent think interior cleanliness is better.

### **Personal security not a concern**

Bus frequency has improved, according to 45.5 percent, while more than 40 percent have noticed changes for the better in seat availability and window graffiti. A total of 52.8 percent said they almost never had a concern for personal security while riding the bus.

On the other hand, 75 percent said they had ridden overcrowded buses at least once a week and 67 percent thought their bus was behind schedule, causing long waits at a bus stop for 59.1 percent.

Ninety-one percent of riders surveyed said it is "very important" to them how often the buses run. But, 43 percent said their bus was early at least once a week. About half of the survey respondents reported being passed up.

### **Noticed service improvements**

Perceptions of bus service were influenced by the MTA's marketing campaign, according to more than half of those surveyed. Eighty-six percent of those who were aware of the "It's getting better on the bus" slogan - and agreed with it - said it made them notice service improvements.

The "small-scale market-oriented" survey, conducted for MTA Countywide Planning and Development between March 28 and May 15, was the first of a series intended to track patron perceptions of Metro Bus service.

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## Rail Chief's Observations Suggest Commuting Patterns are Changing

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(July 11) The opening of the Metro Red Line's North Hollywood extension appears to be changing some commuting patterns in unexpected ways. And the MTA's Rail Operations chief says the rail system "is forming a high-capacity transit backbone that we haven't seen before."



Universal City is becoming a key station in the Metro Red Line system, according to Ralph de la Cruz, deputy executive officer, Rail Operations, who has spent hours riding the trains, talking with passengers and observing ridership patterns.

On two recent occasions de la Cruz followed crowds of commuters who converged on the Vermont corridor from the Westlake area and Wilshire/Western. By the time the trains reached Hollywood/Vine, there were standing loads of between 300 and 500 passengers.

The commuters continued on to Universal City, where de la Cruz estimates that 85 percent of the crowd transferred to Metro Rapid buses. Conversations with patrons indicated most were headed for their jobs in businesses along Ventura Boulevard and Van Nuys Boulevard.

### Major distribution point

A large contingent of passengers who live near the Hollywood/Highland station also is riding the subway to jobs near the Universal City station. "That station is now a major destination and distribution point for riders," says de la Cruz.

**See July 3  
report: "[1  
Million Metro  
Red Line  
Boardings....](#)"**

In its first week of revenue service, Metro Red Line average daily ridership rocketed by 85 percent to 120,500 from a daily average of 65,150 in May, according to Ashok Kumar, director, Countywide Planning's Operations Data Analysis.

Patronage at the North Hollywood station also is growing quickly. On some days, the 840-space parking lot already is at capacity. During the "peak of the peak" period, upwards of 100 passengers will board the subway at the NoHo terminus, de la Cruz observed.

The new extension, which now links Hollywood with Universal City and other entertainment venues in the San Fernando Valley, also has boosted late-night subway ridership.

### Late-night standing loads

"We have such interesting venues near the three new stations," says de la Cruz, "We're boarding a combination of tourists and workers on trains that are carrying fully seated - and in some cases standing - loads on some trains as late as 10:30 or 11 p.m. on the North Hollywood extension."

One morning, de la Cruz spoke with a number of commuters who normally ride Metrolink from Burbank into Union Station, then transfer to the subway to reach their final destinations. They had driven to North Hollywood and were riding the Metro Red Line to determine whether the subway would provide a quicker, cheaper commute.

"We have the potential to attract some ridership from Metrolink," de la

Cruz speculates. "We may be able to take passengers from the Valley stations to their destinations more directly and faster without their having to go all the way into Union Station and then head back west on the subway or a local bus. We also run much more frequent headways giving commuters more options on when to travel."

Extending the subway into the Valley appears to have boosted ridership on the Metro Blue Line by about five percent and on the Metro Green Line by about 10 percent. The Long Beach to LA line now transports a daily average of about 65,000 passengers, while the east-west light-rail line carries an average of about 27,000.

Some of these passengers continue on via the Metro Red Line to jobs at the medical centers along Vermont Avenue, while others ride all the way to the Valley, says de la Cruz.

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### **Disabled Patrons and Personal Attendants Will Ride Metro System Free Starting Sept. 1**

(July 12) Beginning Sept. 1, some disabled persons and their personal care attendants will begin riding Metro Bus and Metro Rail lines for free. It's part of a two-year demonstration program aimed at giving disabled patrons more transit options and saving some \$1.6 million a year by encouraging them to use fixed-route transit instead of more expensive curb-to-curb paratransit services.

Currently, some 37,000 disabled persons - including wheelchair-bound patrons - use Access Services, Inc. (ASI), for transportation. Approximately 24,000 of those also are eligible to use personal care attendants.

With ASI's Access Paratransit ridership growing 25 to 36 percent annually since 1995, its 400 leased vans and 900 contracted taxi sedans are fully loaded during peak service hours. The high rate of usage - 1.7 million boardings a year - sparked a recent protest in which some disabled patrons complained about long waits for pickups and poor service.

#### **Attendants ride free**

Operating under a \$43.5 million annual agreement with the MTA to provide paratransit services, ASI charges a distance-based fare of \$1.50 to \$4 for a one-way trip. The attendants ride free on paratransit services as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Although the disabled pay only a 45-cent fare on MTA-operated lines, their attendants must pay full fare - an apparent disincentive to use MTA services. Most of those eligible for ASI services use fixed-route transit less than twice a month. The MTA Board approved the free-fare demonstration at its June meeting.

"By offering a free fare," says Scott Greene, transportation planning manager, "we're encouraging them to try the rail system and the bus system, which has improved vastly with better lifts, low-floor buses and driver sensitivity training."

The curb-to-curb service provided by ASI costs about \$20 per trip, while a trip on a fixed-route service requires only about \$1 in subsidies. The MTA estimates that some 85,000 patrons who use ASI services each year will switch to Metro Bus or Metro Rail to take advantage of the free fares.

#### **Savings of \$1.6 million**

The MTA hopes to shift at least five percent of ASI riders to Metro Bus or Metro Rail. Even though the disabled patron and personal attendant would pay nothing, the MTA could save \$1.6 million a year, even considering a \$76,000 loss in annual farebox revenues.

Diverting five percent of ASI riders each day to Metro Buses or Metro Rail would mean about 275 more boardings of disabled persons, including about 100 in wheelchairs. With the Metro system currently handling 300 to 400 wheelchair boardings a day, another 100 is considered manageable.

"We think the typical Access Paratransit passenger who takes advantage of the free-fare demonstration will be more mobile, perhaps persons who are blind or have hidden disabilities like epilepsy or diabetes," says Greene.

Persons eligible for ASI services carry photo ID cards. Sample ID cards will be distributed to all operating divisions and to the LAPD and Sheriff's deputies prior to the start of the demonstration, Sept. 1.

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## **MTA to Celebrate Metro Blue Line 10th Anniversary with Spirit of the 'Red Car'**

By RICK JAGER

In celebration of the return of rail service to Los Angeles, MTA will join elected officials, Friday, July 14, to mark the 10th anniversary of the Metro Blue Line.

[See metro.net June 13: Pacific Electric 'Red Cars' Will Return ...](#)

The event, which will be held at 10 a.m. near the Washington Station in downtown LA, will be highlighted by the unveiling of a modern-day Pacific Electric "Red Car," similar to those that once traveled throughout the region nearly 40 years ago.

The Pacific Electric Red Cars, to be put into service this weekend, are actually a clever disguise of existing Metro Blue Line rail cars, created by an enthusiastic and dedicated MTA maintenance crew that converted two Sumitomo P-865 light rail cars to look very much like the historic trolleys.

### **A step back in time**

Rail patrons using the Metro Blue Line this weekend will have a surprise in store for them. Many will take a step back in time and board what appears to be a Pacific Electric Red Car, last seen in service in 1961.

"There's a lot of nostalgia associated with the Red Cars and we wanted to commemorate 10 years of rail service in the region with this history," said Tom Conner, MTA executive officer of Transit Operations. "This is our way of saying 'thank you' to the people along the corridor who have made the Metro Blue Line such a success and have supported it with their patronage."

Due to the success of the Metro Blue Line - it has transported , more than 135 million boarding passengers in its 10 years of operation - it is presently undergoing a \$9.7 million face-lift with a project that will increase the line's capacity. Construction has already begun to lengthen 19 Metro Blue Line station platforms to accommodate three-car trains.

### **Project to be complete in 2001**

At present, the Metro Blue Line can operate only two-car trains on the 22-mile route between downtown Los Angeles and Long Beach. Work on the platform project began in May and is expected to be completed by late summer 2001.

Ridership on the Metro Blue Line has reached 63,000 average weekday boardings, a five percent increase since the June 24 opening of the North Hollywood extension of the Metro Red Line subway in the San Fernando Valley.

Overall ridership on the 59.4 mile Metro Rail System has increase to 211,015 daily boardings, up 42 percent compared to May figures of 149,050 daily boardings.

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Customer service agent Jorja Jones, left, assists transit riders at the North Hollywood station, where Division 5 operators Chriss Williams and Danetta Patton, right, are also helping to coordinate rush hour crowds.

## Metro Operators Pressed into Service to Help Crowds Using NoHo, Universal City Stations

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(July 13) Transit Operations this week pressed into service a team of Metro operators and customer service agents to help handle crowds of commuters flocking into the Metro Red Line's North Hollywood and Universal City stations during morning rush periods.

Five bus operators worked as Metro ambassadors at the two stations from 6 a.m. until 2 p.m., Monday through Friday. They familiarized passengers with the ticket vending machines (TVMs), answered questions and distributed informational brochures and maps of the Metro system. Two were stationed at Universal City and three at North Hollywood.

MTA Revenue assigned a customer service agent to each of the stations, from 6:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday, to sell one-way, round-trip and one-way tickets with transfers. Agents also may be assigned next week, if warranted, says Jim Cudlip, assistant director, Revenue.

### Crowds overwhelmed TVMs

This weekend, Metro operators with portable fareboxes will be positioned at the North Hollywood and Universal City stations to sell Metro Rail tickets. Officials say weekend crowds have overwhelmed the TVMs at times, delaying patrons. There are five machines at each station.

Cudlip has assigned maintenance personnel to special duty at the three new stations, including Hollywood/Highland, to ensure that the TVMs operate properly and that cash boxes are emptied promptly to prevent machine jams.

[See metro.net July 11: "Rail Chief's Observations..."](#)

"We're keeping the machines running and keeping people flowing

through," he said. "It's moving better now and that has a lot to do with passengers getting used to a new system."

During several hours spent observing passenger flow at the two northernmost stations this week, Cudlip saw unusually large numbers of commuting workers and tourists using the subway following the normal morning rush period.

#### **Five-hour rush period**

"Instead of a three-hour morning rush, it's more like a five-hour rush period at Universal City and North Hollywood," he said.

"Then there's a late-night crowd of workers and tourists that uses the subway and buses." The Universal Studios theme park closes at 10 p.m., about the same time that theater performances are ending in the NoHo area.

Customer Service Agents Fanny Ortiz and Jorja Jones were assigned to sell tickets at the two northernmost stations. The five operators assigned to the North Hollywood and Universal City stations this week are Jean Dykes of Division 7 and Hilda Bostick, Kevin Davis, Danetta Patton and Chriss Williams, all of Division 5. Patton and Williams earlier assisted as Metro ambassadors during the introduction of Metro Rapid service.

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**'Express Yourself'  
Essay Contest Winner  
Spends Time Saved  
with His Daughter**

**By GARY WOSK**

**(July 14) A panel of**

**judges has declared a 48-  
year-old Woodland Hills  
father who "feels**

**compelled to write about subjects he feels strongly about" as  
winner of the MTA's "Express Yourself and Win" essay contest. The  
competition encouraged riders to explain how Metro Rail saves  
them time.**



Rail Supervisor Barbara Service and Bus Operator Cora Hooks hoist the "Express Yourself" banner.

The contest was one element of an aggressive communications campaign to promote the June 24 grand opening of the Metro Rail extension from Hollywood to the San Fernando Valley. Nearly 1,000 entries were reviewed.

First-place essay writer Michael Guetzow, winner of a round trip for two on Southwest Airlines, wrote the following:

**That special giggle**

**"There is somewhere, deep inside my 7-year-old daughter, Sarah, a special giggle and sweet smile she saves just for me. The time saved riding Metro Rail would allow me to play her games, read her books, or just enjoy her company, and find that special giggle she saves just for me."**

Guetzow, a Chatsworth-based travel agent who promotes the benefits of Metro Rail when planning trips for his clients, is not sure where to book the family's vacation with the winning prize.

**"Why would we want to go anywhere, now when we have a great subway?" he said.**

The second place essayist, Deborah Newton of Los Angeles, will receive a \$250 shopping spree at Ralphps. She wrote:

**"I've been trying to find the time to spend with my children because I work. On Metro Rail, we pretend we're on a sightseeing tour. I will take my children to the show, zoo or beach. And everywhere we go is in Metro Rail's reach. I will teach my children to travel responsibly when riding Metro Rail...and that we don't need a car because Metro Rail can take us anywhere near or far. Not only do I save time and money while on the run, riding on Metro Rail gives us time to have fun. "**

**Three tied for third**

**Three essayists tied for third place and will receive free travel on the Metro System for three months.**

**Paiwei Wei of Los Angeles wrote:**

**"Ever notice how people naturally daydream when they sit inside a subway train? The deadline-driven, caffeine world robs us of our personal time  $\frac{3}{4}$  to tend to the gardens of our imaginations  $\frac{3}{4}$  or to dream about playgrounds with puffy white clouds and fields of green. Far from the leashes of pagers, cell phones, e-mails, smog, gridlock, and road rage  $\frac{3}{4}$  subways are the overlooked sanctuaries from the daily grind. Heck, it gets you there  $\frac{3}{4}$  without stop signs, parking meters or a single red light. A fleeting moment to**

**daydream is a wonderful treat...even if it only lasts until the next station."**

**Christine Springett of Studio City wrote:**

**"Metro Rail is actually giving me back time that was previously lost sitting in my car."**

**And Paramount resident William Ochoa wrote:**

**"After living in the LA area for 36 years, for the first time I can see things I never knew existed."**

**Entry forms in English and Spanish were distributed on all Metro Buses and Metro Rail, beginning April 3. Southern California Rideshare distributed the forms to some 4,000 companies.**

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### **'Red Car' Debut on Metro Blue Line Marks 10th Anniversary of Metro Rail**

By GAYLE ANDERSON, Associate Editor  
(July 14) With the sound of a familiar "e-tone"

[PHOTO GALLERY](#)

horn announcing its departure, a modern-day Pacific Electric "Red Car" took its first passengers on a nostalgic ride following ceremonies marking the 10th anniversary of Metro Rail and the return of rail service to Los Angeles.

MTA Chair Yvonne Braithwaite Burke told some 200 guests and attending media that the two Metro Rail cars, outfitted to look like the popular PE cars of the 40s, "symbolize a continuum of rail service in Los Angeles, from the glory days of Pacific Electric to the new glory days of Metro Rail."

The event, held at 10 a.m., Friday, near the Washington Station in downtown LA, celebrated the anniversary with an inaugural ride on Metro Blue Line light-rail cars fashioned to look like the historic trolleys that traversed the region nearly 60 years ago.

#### **Color scheme and details**

The 90-day conversion project, a replication of the Red Car's familiar color scheme and details, was painstakingly applied by Division 11's Rail Paint and Body staff, Lee Hetherington and Brian Montalbano.

A perfect replication right down to the buttons on the vintage conductor uniforms worn for the occasion by Division 11 train operators Jesus Ruiz and Frank DeMascio, the nostalgic PE-like cars began picking up surprised and delighted passengers on the inaugural ride.




The trains will continue in operation indefinitely, said Duane Martin, rail division transportation manager. Although train operators will not wear the historic conductor uniforms, they all will have the opportunity to operate the specially outfitted cars.

**Undergoing a face-lift**

During ten years of operation, the Metro Blue Line has transported more than 135 million boarding passengers. It is presently undergoing a \$9.7 million face-lift with the extension of 19 Metro Blue Line station platforms to accommodate three-car trains. Work on the platform project began in May and is expected to be completed by late summer 2001.

Ridership on the Metro Blue Line has reached 63,000 average weekday boardings, a five-percent increase since the June 24 opening of the North Hollywood extension of the Metro Rail subway in the San Fernando Valley. Overall ridership on the 59.4 mile Metro Rail System has increased to 211,015 daily boardings, up 42 percent compared to May figures of 149,050 daily boardings.

| PHOTO GALLERY<br>click on image to view  |   |
|--|---|
|    |    |
| Metro Blue Line "pocket track" at Washington Station is site of anniversary celebration.   | Division 11 craftsmen Brian Montalbano and Lee Hetherington attended to the "Red Car" details.  |
|   |   |
| MTA Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke is joined at the podium by City Attorney James Hahn, flanked by sister Janice and mother Ramona. | With Supervisor Burke at the helm, "conductors" line up VIPs for inaugural ride: from left, MTA Board Member James Cragin, Operator Jesus Ruiz, Long Beach City Councilwoman Jenny Oropeza, Janice, Ramona and James Hahn, and Operator Frank DeMascio. |
|  |   |

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|--|--|
|  |         |
| <p>Inaugural Ride begins at Washington Station.</p>                              | <p>Pacific Electric car is a nostalgic sight from the opposite side of the platform.</p> |

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**Updated July 20**

## Board Items to Watch

### Harbor Transitway Service, DNC Buses on Committee Agendas; Board Sets Special Meeting

(July 17) MTA Board committees this month will consider motions that include offering all-day express bus service on the Harbor Transitway and providing 100 coaches for use during the Democratic National Convention in August. A special Board meeting also is scheduled at 11:30 a.m., Thursday, July 20.

At the special Board meeting, members will consider two items carried over from the June meeting and will conduct a workshop on the 2000 STIP abbreviated Call for Projects. At stake is \$180 million provided through Gov. Gray Davis' transportation initiative and \$71 million in transportation planning funds.

During the workshop, Board members will review the rankings of a number of projects submitted by local cities, transit agencies and others. A slate of projects that merit funding has been recommended by MTA staff and the agency's Technical Advisory Committee.

Here is a list of items to watch during the July Board committee meetings:

#### **■ OPERATIONS COMMITTEE** **Wednesday, July 19, 1 p.m.**

**Evaluate Emission of CNG Buses, Item 12: **PULLED** by staff.** The MTA's Citizen Advisory Committee is recommending that the MTA cooperate with the Air Quality Management District and the California Air Resources Board in funding an evaluation of emissions from at least five CNG buses. The test would be performed by the University of Minnesota mobile emissions unit or another such facility.

[See metro.net July 5: "Harbor Transitway Use."](#)

**Harbor Transitway Service and Fares, Item 13: **Staff report requested.**** The committee requested a financial analysis of offering a flat \$1.35 fare on the Harbor Transitway and also on the El Monte Busway. Members want to know whether the number of riders attracted by lowering the fare would offset the financial impact. The report is due at the July 27 Board meeting. The committee will consider whether to expand daily service on Line 445, including operating the line seven days a week. The motion includes reducing fares on lines 442, 444, 445, 446, 447 and 550.

**Receive and File:** Transit Operations executive officer's report on performance and bus acquisitions. Fourth quarter Workers' Compensation report.

#### **■ PLANNING & PROGRAMMING** **Thursday, July 20, 1 p.m.**

**Schedule Public Hearing, Item 31: **APPROVED** by committee.** The motion calls for scheduling a hearing for Saturday, Sept. 9, to receive

public comment on Harbor Transitway service modifications, refinements to the service on the Wilshire/Whittier and Venture Boulevard corridors, and other proposed service changes.

**2000 TIP Call for Projects Recertification, Item 32: **APPROVED by committee.**** The motion calls for recertifying \$239.8 million in FY 2000-01 commitments from previous TIP Call for Projects. It would amend the FY 2000-01 budget to permit reallocation of \$3.4 million; deobligate \$44.4 million in previously approved funding; and adopt a new lapsing policy for TIP Call for Projects.

■ **EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT**  
**Thursday, July 20, 11 a.m.**

**Buses for the Democratic National Convention, Item 26: **APPROVED by committee.**** The committee will consider a charter for 100 buses to the LA Convention and Visitors Bureau for the DNC convention, Aug. 13-17.

[See metro.net June 29: "100 Buses".](#)

**Receive and File:** Update on legislation of interest to the MTA.  
Monthly status report on Pasadena Blue Line Joint Powers Authority.

Other scheduled committee meetings:

■ **Finance & Budget Committee**  
**Thursday, July 20, 9:30 a.m**

■ **Construction Committee**  
**Wednesday, July 19, 3 p.m.**

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## Universal City Station Rose to 5th Place Following NoHo Extension Opening

(July 18) With the Metro Red Line's arrival in the San Fernando Valley, June 24, the Universal City station immediately took its place as the fifth most heavily used station on the 16-station subway system.

The station now averages 19,488 boardings and arrivals each day. Not far behind in seventh place is the North Hollywood station with 15,902 average daily boardings and arrivals. Interestingly, about 1,000 of those who board at North Hollywood, get off at Universal City station each day.

Parking lots at both of the subway's Valley stations provide further evidence of the spurt in ridership. By mid-morning, the 847-space lot at the North Hollywood station and the 250-space lot at Universal City usually are full.



Opening day crowds pack  
Universal City Station

### Most heavily used stations

The most heavily used subway stations are 7th/Metro, with 41,712 average daily boardings and arrivals; Union Station, 23,772; Wilshire/Vermont, 23,526; Pershing Square, 21,560; Universal City, 19,488; Wilshire/McArthur Park, 16,239; and North Hollywood, 15,902.

Two stations have gained more than 100 percent in patron usage since the extension opened. They are Hollywood/Western, by 147 percent, and Vermont/Beverly, by 122 percent. In addition, the Wilshire/Vermont station saw a 97 percent increase in usage.

Since the opening of the North Hollywood extension, total average daily boardings on the Metro Red Line have jumped from 64,190 to 121,477 -- an average increase of 89 percent. The opening also boosted ridership on the Metro Blue Line by five percent and on the Metro Green Line by 10 percent.

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## El Monte Busway Reverts to 3-Person Carpool Lane July 24

(July 19) Beginning Monday, July 24, three-person carpools once again will be required on the El Monte Busway – at least during the weekday peak commuting hours of 5 - 9 a.m. and 4 - 7 p.m.

The change is the result of a new law (Assembly Bill 769) signed earlier this month by Governor Gray Davis. Under the legislation, two-person carpools may use the busway during off-peak hours.

Caltrans maintenance crews plan to install new black and white regulatory signs along the busway, July 22 and 23. The California Highway Patrol, LA County Sheriff's Department and the LAPD will not cite carpool lane drivers who violate the new minimum occupancy requirements before July 24.

### First carpool lane in California

The El Monte Busway is the first carpool lane in California to operate under two different minimum occupancy requirements. The legislation, AB-769, requires Caltrans traffic engineers to prepare and submit an operational study for this new demonstration project to the Legislature by January 1, 2001. The project is scheduled to terminate on July 1, 2001.

The busway, which extends 11.5 miles in each direction in the median of I-10 from the El Monte Bus Terminal on Santa Anita Avenue in El Monte to Alameda Street/Union Station in downtown Los Angeles, opened in 1973 as a "Buses Only" lane.

It was the first High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) project in Los Angeles County. In 1976, carpools with three or more persons were also allowed to use the Busway.

For years, the busway was the most successful carpool lane in Los Angeles County. During peak hours, it moved 80 buses and approximately 6,000 people per hour.

**Editor's Note:** This news release was issued by Caltrans. [Back to MTA Report](#)

## **MTA's Marching Orders: Find Parking Relief for Subway Riders**

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(July 19) The Board's Operations Committee gave the MTA staff "marching orders," Wednesday, to provide parking relief for patrons at the Metro Red Line's North Hollywood and Universal City stations.

"This is a problem we have right now and it's going to affect the popularity and ridership of our system," said Committee Chair Hal Bernson. "We need to act quickly to do something to resolve the problems. We need to act within the next few days."

Transit Operations Chief Tom Conner reported that staff members are looking at several immediate options, including posting attendants to ensure that only Metro Rail riders use the parking lots. "There is a cost associated with that," he noted. "We need to figure out how to solve this problem at the lowest additional cost."

### **For transit riders only**

Jim de la Loza, executive officer, Countywide Planning and Development, told the committee that signs will be posted at the lots by next week identifying them for use only by transit riders. He said the MTA staff is working with the City of Los Angeles, LADOT and the LAPD to address the problem.

De la Loza said a comprehensive parking policy will be part of the agency's Long-Range Transportation Plan, but that, meanwhile, the MTA and LADOT would try to find other available parking space.

Some of the ideas floated by committee members included charging those who don't ride the Metro Red Line, but who park in the North Hollywood and Universal City lots. Bernson also raised the possibility of hiring a parking service with attendants to monitor the lots.

Board members' concerns about overcrowded parking lots at the subway stations may lead to the adoption of a parking policy for the entire Metro Rail system.

### **Overall parking policy**

Acting on a recommendation by CEO Julian Burke, Board Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke requested committee consideration of an overall parking policy. Bernson said the issue would be on the calendar for the August meeting.

"The approach to an overall policy on parking could be short- and long-term," said Board Chair Burke. "(We need) a policy that (says) if a particular lot is crowded and unable to meet people's demands, certain things should be done."

She warned, however, that the MTA shouldn't create a situation in trying to resolve the parking problem - such as stiff parking fees - that would discourage people from riding Metro Rail.

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## **MTA Testing Device Designed to Prevent Rear Wheel Runovers, Save Lives**

By ED SCANNELL

(July 19) The MTA is testing a device designed to avoid injuries and save lives by preventing passengers or pedestrians from being run over by the rear wheels of a bus.

Testing of the S1-Gard began in March, 1998. Currently, seven Metro Buses have been retrofitted with the crescent-shaped barrier which is bolted to the inside of the right rear wheel well.

Manufactured of BASF Polyurethane and backed by a plate of stainless steel, the S1-Gard is eight inches in height and reaches to within a few inches of the pavement. A product of Neopart, the S1-Gard has undergone testing by several transit bus operations in the United States.

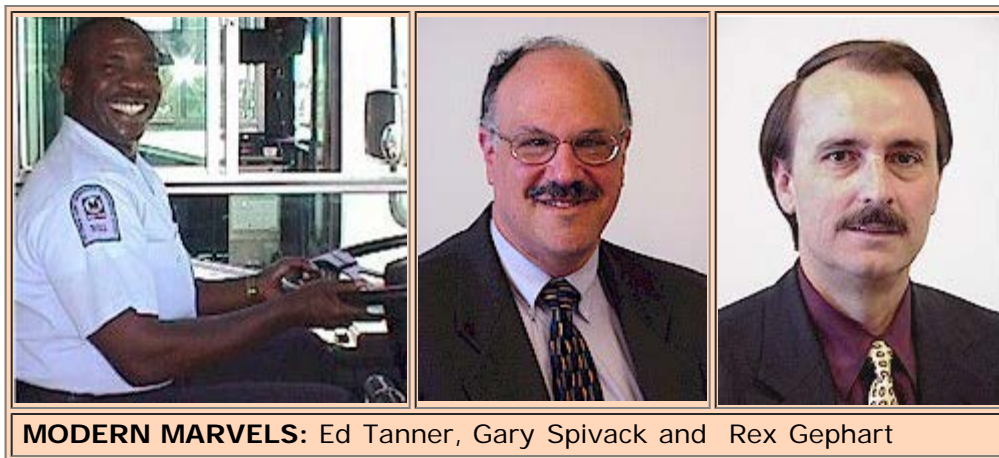
### **Effectively deflects objects**

No buses equipped with the device have yet been involved in incidents that would provide a real-life demonstration of the S1-Gard's benefits. But, accident simulations have shown the S1-Gard to be effective in deflecting objects placed in the path of the right rear dual wheels.

"If the S1-Gard demonstrates from a maintenance standpoint that it wears well, and if funding is available, we would probably move ahead with the project," said Robert H. Torres, MTA's director of bus operations safety. The cost of the S1-Gard, including installation, is approximately \$1,500 per unit.

Montebello Bus Lines is in the process of retrofitting its fleet of 71 buses with the S1-Gard. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) has recently begun to retrofit its entire fleet of 1,400 buses with the device. WMATA plans to include the S1-Gard in the specifications of all future bus procurements.

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## MTA Employees Marvelous on "Modern Marvels"

By GARY WOSK

(July 25) Former Houston Oilers wide receiver/running back Ed Tanner, who now drives Metro Buses out of Division 18, will be featured along with Gary Spivack of Transit Operations and Rex Gephart of Transit Planning on the History Channel series "Modern Marvels." The episode will be aired Thursday, July 27, at 10 p.m.

Past, present and future buses of all shapes and sizes and purposes are the focus of this installment of "Modern Marvels." The three MTA employees will discuss the latest technology and challenges of operating a large public transit system.

Tanner's appearance on the show marks the first time in nearly two decades that the personable Pasadena resident - who grew up in South Central LA and attended Los Angeles City College and Kentucky State College - has received this much attention.

### **Dodging a defender**

"I definitely miss the excitement of the football field, but I was fortunate to have found a job that is as challenging as dodging a 325-pound defender, is rewarding and fun," said Tanner, who is engaged to be married later this year. "Most importantly, serving the public is very important and something I look forward to doing everyday."

During the approximately 10-minute MTA segment, Tanner, Operations Support Services Manager Gary Spivack and Planning Manager Rex Gephart described the Metro Rapid bus project and its computerized system for monitoring service performance along the two demonstration lines. They also discussed the "talking bus" and the benefits of compressed natural gas vehicles among other topics.

The episode, entitled "Buses," will spotlight a variety of buses, ranging from transit and school buses to former Oakland Raider's coach John Madden's cruiser and a 48,000 pound luxury liner with satellite TV and hot tubs. It will show the different stages of building a bus from the ground up.

### **Local producer for show**

The installment was produced by Sherman Oaks-based Actuality Productions, which has filmed 120 shows for "Modern Marvels," including features on Hoover Dam, the Statue of Liberty, the Golden Gate Bridge, Mount Rushmore and television.



"It was fascinating. I learned a lot," said Acutality Productions writer/producer Luke Ellis. "When the History Channel first requested the show, the subject did not seem that fascinating, but as we got into it there was more information than we could possibly use on a one-hour show."

"Spivack and Gephart provided a behind-the-scenes look at the technology that is improving the transit system in Los Angeles," said Ellis, "while Ed Tanner provided an in-the-trenches perspective from someone who is actually working with these new systems. He was very congenial, just a very nice gentleman."

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Tony Armada, senior vice president, Kaiser-Permanente, leads Monday's ribbon-cutting. From left are Lynda Bybee, MTA Public Affairs; LeRon Gubler, Hollywood Chamber of Commerce; Lavette Garcia, Kaiser nurse and Metro rider, and Council Member Jackie Goldberg.

## MTA, Kaiser Open Subway Entrance to Hospital at Vermont/Sunset



Click on image to view

By JOSE UBALDO

(July 25) MTA and Kaiser-Permanente officials on Monday opened the Kaiser-Permanente Portal at the Metro Red Line's Vermont/Sunset station. The new entrance will offer better, easier access to Kaiser's medical facilities located at the northwest corner of Sunset and Vermont.

Los Angeles City Council Member Jackie Goldberg, whose 13th district includes the hospital, participated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony with MTA and Kaiser-Permanente officials. The new entrance, which is on the station's mezzanine level, offers two elevators, two ticket vending machines, and public telephones.

"People who need access to the hospital won't have to cross Vermont Avenue anymore," said Goldberg. "The new entrance will provide better access for the public in need of medical attention."

Anthony Armada, senior vice president, Kaiser-Permanente Metro L.A. Area; LeRon Gubler, president, Hollywood Chamber of Commerce; and Lynda Bybee, MTA Public Affairs also participated in the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

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## Judge Extends 'Cooling-Off' Period in MTA, Union Contract Talks

(July 25) A Superior Court judge today extended the "cooling-off" period in the MTA's negotiations with its three major labor unions. The injunction now expires at 12:01 a.m., Sept. 5.

Judge Dzintra Janavs' order maintains the status of all union wages, benefits and contract terms with one exception during the period of the injunction. The exception is a cost-of-living adjustment that would have taken effect Sept. 1.

[See metro.net July 6: "Court Issues Restraining Order."](#)

The judge's action covers the period of the Democratic National Convention, scheduled Aug. 14-17, in Los Angeles.

Judge Janavs issued a temporary restraining order, July 6, that blocked any job actions by the unions or a lockout by the MTA. The agency is in contract talks with the United Transportation Union, representing operators; the Amalgamated Transit Union, representing maintenance workers; and the Transportation Communications Union, representing clerical workers.

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## Artifacts from Subway's Chinatown Dig on Display at Autry Museum

(July 26) Artifacts from LA's Old Chinatown that were recovered during construction of the Metro Red Line are on display at the [Autry Museum of Western Heritage](#) in a newly opened exhibit entitled, "On Gold Mountain: A Chinese American Experience."

The articles, all dating from the 1880s through the 1920s, include a china rice bowl and tea pot, a doll's head made in France, a porcelain wine cup and two porcelain spoons. The spoons are showcased with a full page color photo in the exhibit catalog.

The artifacts were lent to the exhibit by the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California. They were donated to the Society by the MTA following construction of subway facilities at Union Station.

### Doll's head was significant

The MTA's archeology consultant, Roberta Greenwood, monitored the subway excavation and analyzed the artifacts from the Old Chinatown dig. Most of the recovered items were commonly used in everyday life, but the doll's head proved to be significant.

"It might seem strange to find a French doll's head among the artifacts," says Greenwood, "but, it proves that Chinatown was not populated just by men, as people thought, but that families and children were present. We recovered many children's toys."

Some 40,000 items were recovered during the Old Chinatown dig. Union Station and the East Portal were constructed on the site, which was bounded by Alameda, Cesar Chavez, Vignes and the 101 Freeway. Old Chinatown was demolished in 1933 to make way for Union Station. The present Chinatown opened in 1935.

### Traces six generations

"On Gold Mountain" traces the history of six generations of the See family, who lived in and established an antique business in LA's Chinatown.

The exhibit will continue at the Autry Museum through Jan. 1, 2001. The museum is located at 4700 Western Heritage Way in Griffith Park near the LA Zoo. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Parking is free. Admission is \$7.50 for adults; \$5 for students and seniors 60+; and \$3 for children. [Back to MTA Report](#)



Click on image to can see examples of the items the MTA recovered during the Old Chinatown dig on the "L.A. Underground" page of the MTA website. Or, tour L.A. Yesteryear at "L.A. Underground" on [www.mta.net](http://www.mta.net). Check out Gold Mountain schedule at ["What's Going On"](#) link at Autry Museum web site.

## **MTA to Reroute 17 Bus Lines, July 29, for Democratic Convention**

By GARY WOSK

(July 26) The MTA plans to reroute 17 Metro Bus lines serving downtown Los Angeles near the Staples Center, beginning July 29, to accommodate street closures and detours around the Democratic National Convention (DNC) site.

Bus lines, originating as far south as San Pedro, as far north as Highland Park, as far west as Malibu and as far east as El Monte, are being re-routed. The City of Los Angeles will convert two-way streets into one-way arteries in order to improve traffic flow. Other downtown streets will be closed completely due to security concerns and possible demonstrations.

### **One square mile**

The MTA service area affected by these detours is approximately one square mile. This area could increase as a result of unforeseen circumstances.

Metro Bus lines 33 and 333 will be rerouted beginning July 29. On Aug. 5, lines 30, 31, 56, 70, 81, and express lines 434, 436, 439, 442, 444, 445, 446 and 447 will be rerouted.

On August 11, service changes will affect lines 362 and 460. Other lines that could potentially be rerouted include lines 27, 28, 83, 84, 85 and 328.

### **May affect rail**

The Metro Red Line subway and light rail Metro Blue Line also may be affected.

Service change notices with maps directing Metro bus passengers to alternate bus stops and streets will be distributed on buses beginning this week. Metro Bus patrons should plan their trips early and allow extra travel time. On average, one-way trips downtown could take between 10 to 15 minutes longer than normal.

Bus service will return to normal following the DNC, which runs from August 14 through August 17, when the City of Los Angeles reopens the streets.

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## **Board Votes to Expand Harbor Transitway Service; Approves 100 Buses, Crews for Demo Convention**

(July 27) The MTA Board voted, Thursday, to expand Metro Bus service on the Harbor Transitway, beginning Oct. 1, and approved a staff recommendation to provide 100 buses with operators and maintenance crews for the Democratic National Convention in August.

The Harbor Transitway vote changes what now is rush period-only service to all-day express service between San Pedro and downtown LA. The motion also established a \$1.35 one-way fare for three months. The current fare for the full length of the Transitway is \$3.35.

Fare reductions would apply to lines 442, 444, 445, 446, 447 and Line 550. The MTA serves about 2,500 daily Transitway riders.

The upgraded service is expected to start in conjunction with the opening of Transitway stations at Carson Street and Pacific Coast Highway, the southernmost of eight bus stations on the freeway. The Board requested a status report every 30 days following the start of the new service.

### **Buses for the convention**

In addition to approving a charter of 100 buses for the Democratic National Convention (DNC), Aug. 14-17, the Board action also means that 138 Metro Bus operators and mechanics will be detailed to provide transportation for delegates.

Operators from every almost every MTA operating division are being trained along with personnel from the Los Angeles, Long Beach, Montebello, Foothill and Culver City transit agencies. The MTA will provide the largest number of operators and 100 of the more than 250 buses needed for the DNC.

On other items of interest, the Board took these actions:

**Schedule Public Hearing, Item 31: APPROVED on consent.** The motion calls for scheduling a hearing for Saturday, Sept. 9, to receive public comment on Harbor Transitway service modifications, refinements to the service on the Wilshire/Whittier and Venture Boulevard corridors, and other proposed service changes.

### **2000 TIP Call for Projects Recertification, Item 32: APPROVED.**

The motion calls for recertifying \$239.8 million in FY 2000-01 commitments from previous TIP Call for Projects. It would amend the FY 2000-01 budget to permit reallocation of \$3.4 million; deobligate \$44.4 million in previously approved funding; and adopt a new lapsing policy for TIP Call for Projects.

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## **FTA Adding MTA's Metro Rapid Project to Nationwide Bus Rapid Transit Consortium**

(July 28) The Federal Transit Administration is adding the MTA's Metro Rapid system to its nationwide consortium of Bus Rapid Transit systems.

The FTA previously included 10 Bus Rapid Transit systems in the consortium. The MTA's Metro Rapid project will become the 11th to be added to the group, even though it is the only one without a dedicated right-of-way for its buses.

"The FTA is adding Metro Rapid to the consortium because we've been able to achieve our passenger service objectives without the dedicated rights-of-way that the other systems have," says Rex Gephart, Metro Rapid project manager.

### **MTA joining consortium**

Current consortium members are Boston, Cleveland, Honolulu, Miami, Santa Clara, Hartford, Charlotte, N.C.; Eugene, Ore.; San Juan, P.R.; and the Dulles Corridor in Virginia. The MTA will join this group from its present status as a "participating project."

Participating projects are located in Chicago, Pittsburgh, Albany, N.Y.; Montgomery County, Md.; and in Alameda and Contra Costa counties, Calif.

The MTA's Metro Rapid system, with a full program description, photos and illustrations, is featured on the FTA's Internet web site at [brt.volpe.dot.gov/projects/losangeles.html](http://brt.volpe.dot.gov/projects/losangeles.html)

MTA Transit Operations continues to tweak the Metro Rapid system to improve service, but also is adding 10 more buses to the lineup to serve the expanding ridership, Gephart says.

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