

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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