

## Metro Report Archives

### June 2001 Articles

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#### **[Board Oks](#) Wilshire BRT, Exposition LRT for Mid-City/Westside**

(June 29, 2001) - The MTA Board of Directors today adopted a bus rapid transit project and a light rail project as the combined Locally Preferred Alternative for LA's Mid-City and Westside, two areas of the city that are expected to experience substantial growth over the next two decades.

#### **[Board Upgrades](#) 401(k) and 457 Savings Plans; Improves**

**Retiree Medical Plan** (June 28, 2001) The MTA Board took affirmative action, today, to improve employee benefits by voting to upgrade the 401(k) and 457 savings plans.

#### **[John Fasana](#) Succeeds Yvonne Burke as New MTA Board Chair**

(June 27, 2001) - John Fasana of Duarte will take his seat as the new MTA Board Chair beginning July 1. He will succeed outgoing Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, who has held the position since July 1999.

#### **MTA Contract Bus Lines to Have [All-New Fleet](#) by July 1**

(June 27, 2001) By July 1, the MTA's three major bus line contractors – First Transit, Coach USA and MV Transportation – will be providing passenger service with an all-new fleet of coaches.

#### **Subway Sees Greatest 1-Month [Ridership Gain](#); Gas Prices**

**Cited** (June 26, 2001) The Metro Red Line has experienced its greatest one-month gain in numerical ridership since the system debuted in 1993. Only during the opening of new segments has ridership been higher.

#### **[Top Dallas Transit Official](#) Picked to Head MTA in Los Angeles**

**County** (June 20, 2001) The MTA Board of Directors today hired Roger Snoble of Dallas, one of the top public transit officials in the nation, to become the MTA's new CEO effective in September. The Board's action was unanimous.

#### **[Snoble Led DART](#) to Top Tier of Transit Agencies**

(June 20, 2001) Roger Snoble has led Dallas Area Rapid Transit into the top tier of public transit agencies worldwide. He is responsible for a transit system covering 13 cities over a 700-square mile area with bus, light rail, commuter rail, paratransit and high occupancy vehicle lanes.

#### **Number of [Metro Art Docents](#) to Triple Following**

**Apprenticeship** (June 13, 2001) MTA this summer will triple the number of its Metro Art docents – that group of volunteers who lead free public tours of the artworks found throughout the Metro Rail system.

#### **Westside [Urban Forum](#) to Honor Metro Rapid Project**

(June 13, 2001) The Westside Urban Forum will honor the MTA's Metro Rapid bus project for "...planning, technical and design innovation (in) public transportation..." at a luncheon Friday, June 15.

#### **[Hollywood Bowl Service](#) Resumes June 16; Some Discount,**

**Free Tickets Available** Metro shuttle bus service to the Hollywood Bowl resumes June 29. And this year, the deal includes discount – or even free –

concert tickets.

## **Local Media Views MTA's [New CNG Buses](#) During Tour of RRC**

(June 8, 2001) MTA Board Chair Yvonne Burke and other MTA officials led reporters on a tour of the agency's high-tech central maintenance facility, June 7, to view some of the 30 new buses the MTA is receiving each week and readying for service.

## **[Pam O'Connor](#) to Represent League of Cities on MTA Board**

(June 8, 2001) Pam O'Connor, a member of the Santa Monica City Council, was named, June 7, to represent the League of California Cities on the MTA Board of Directors. She will be sworn in later this month.

## **MTA Promotes Metro Rail for [Travel To NoHo](#) Theatre & Arts**

**Festival** (June 7, 2001) With gasoline prices still hovering around the \$2 per gallon mark, the MTA is promoting Metro Rail as the perfect way to reach the NoHo Theatre & Arts Festival, scheduled June 16 and 17, from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

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### **Bulletin Board**

- **[‘I’ll Miss the MTA,’](#) Burke Tells Visiting Sons** (June 29, 2001) “September 30th will be my last day at the MTA,” CEO Julian Burke told a roomful of youngsters during a talk for Take Our Sons to Work Day. “I’m going to miss it....”
- **[THEY'RE DOIN' GREAT!](#)** Top Divisions for May: Div. 8, Div. 5 Maintenance, Metro Red Line
- **[Energy Fair Pays Off](#) in Prizes for 24 Employees** (June 28, 2001) The MTA's Energy Saving Fair not only helped educate employees on how to conserve a precious resource, it also “energized” a couple of dozen employees who won raffles.
- **[Materiel Management](#) is Procurement's Top Department for 3rd Quarter, FY 2001** (June 27) They came from everywhere, from Division 8 in Chatsworth, to Division 18 in Carson, from Division 9 in El Monte to Division 22 in Lawndale.
- **[Div. 9's Mark Holland](#), Div. 10 Mechanics Win 26th Bus Rodeo** (June 26, 2001) Under a scorching sun, the MTA family enjoyed a relaxing and fun family day full of food, music and, of course, a challenging competition among the “best of the best” bus operators and mechanics at the 26th MTA Bus Rodeo, June 23, at Santa Anita.
- **People Magazine Lists Son of Ralph de la Cruz as One of [‘Top 50 Bachelors’](#)** (June 26, 2001) He's right in there with George Clooney, Ben Affleck, Russell Crowe – one of America's top 50 bachelors – according to the July 2 issue of *People* magazine.
- **Juneteenth Happenings**  
[Ridley-Thomas is Guest Speaker](#) at AAEA ‘Juneteenth’ Celebration  
[The Final Step in a Long Quest for Freedom](#) by Nery Watson  
[Employee-Poets Read Works](#) During AAEA ‘Poets Corner’
- **[MTA Employment Office](#) Now Located on the Plaza** (June 21, 2001) They hardly had the doors open at the new Plaza-level MTA

Employment Office, Monday morning, and already they were doing a brisk business.

- **30 Operators, 10 Maintenance Teams to Compete in [Saturday's Bus Rodeo](#)** (June 20, 2001) After days of preliminary rounds in which sweating operators wrestled their buses through a difficult obstacle course, the field for this year's MTA Bus Rodeo has been narrowed from 195 to 30 competitors.
- **[A Hoot and a Holler!](#)** Being volunteer judges for the preliminary MTA Bus Rodeo competition was a hoot and a holler – a unique experience filled with swirling clouds of dust, crushed cones, and some daring near-misses.
- **[2.85% Pay Hike](#)** Due July 1; New Medical and Retirement Benefit Plans Go to Board
- **[Blood Donors Needed](#)**: Cancer Takes Eyes of 6-Year-Old Elsa
- **['Take Our Sons to Work Day'](#)** Scheduled Friday, June 29 (June 18, 2001) The MTA is inviting the sons of employees to participate in the fourth annual "Take Our Sons to Work Day" on Friday, June 29. This year's theme is "A Summer Day at the MTA."
- RRC Recognizes [Top Performers](#) for the Quarter
- **[New Law to Equalize 401\(k\) and 457 Plans; Double Contributions](#)** (June 14, 2001) Beginning Jan. 1, 2002, MTA employees not only can belong to both the 401(k) and 457 savings plans, but also can more than double the amount of money they're allowed to sock away for retirement.
- **[Graduates All](#): More Degrees for Government Relations staff**
- The **[MTA's Accounting Department](#)** has won a national Certificate of Achievement for Excellence for its annual financial report.
- **Co-Workers of [Jesse Castorena](#) Seeking TOWP Donations for Cancer Fight**
- **[In the Navy](#)** While his Arthur Winston Division 5 co-workers looked on, May 30, Mechanic Solomona Moala, 32, was sworn into the U.S. Naval Reserve
- **[SoCal Transit Advocates](#) Schedule Seminar at MTA HQ**
- **[500 Gather on Plaza](#)** to Enjoy Farmers Market, Barbecue Lunch
- **IN MEMORIUM [Robert Spradley](#) of Facilities Maintenance Dies After Long Illness**
- **[Bus Rodeo Prelims Set, June 13–16; Finals on June 23 at Santa Anita](#)** (June 7, 2001) Some of the Metro Bus system's best operators will test themselves against a complex obstacle course at Santa Anita Race Track, June 13 –16, during qualifying rounds for the 26th MTA Bus Rodeo.

- [New officers](#) raise the banner of the MTA Toastmaster
- [Providing Dental Care for Philippines' Poor Was an Emotional Experience](#) (June 6, 2001) Tears glisten in Rose Sanchez's eyes when she tells the story. Jerry Ramos also becomes emotional. When more than 500 poor people in their Philippine homeland crammed a one-day dental clinic the two helped set up in April, the experience was heartrending.
- [Budget Award](#) The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has received a Certificate of Recognition for Budget Preparation from the Government Finance Officers Association.
- [Cragin Farewell](#) CEO Julian Burke presented a commemorative plaque, last Friday, to James Cragin of Gardena, in appreciation for his eight years' service on the MTA Board.
- **MTA Mosaic - Happy Travelers** [On Tour with Public Affairs](#)
- Seminar Will Train Managers, Supervisors on MTA's [Discipline Process](#)
- 23 Employees Complete [Transportation Leadership](#) Academy
- MTA's Anthony [Simiele and Daughter](#), 13, Graduate from College
- **IN MEMORIUM** [David D. Dominguez](#), 53, a former assistant to the General Manager of the SCRTD, died May 31 of liver complications. A funeral mass is scheduled Tuesday, June 5.
- [Jake's Adventures](#) **Jake Manages (Barely) to Survive a Tippy Canoe and Trillium, Too** Jake admits he's not a patient man. So, when his father-in-law's fixation with flower photography nearly drove him mad, he was happy to escape to a quiet lake for an evening of fishing with his mother-in-law. Or, so he thought....

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**Graduates All:** Marisa Yeager, left, who just received a master's degree in Public Policy from Cal State Long Beach, and Cathy Manzo, right, who just earned a bachelor's degree in Business Management from the University of Phoenix, help Government Relations intern Darlene Urquidez try on a graduate's mortar board. Urquidez, a TCAP student, will receive her diploma from Franklin High School, June 28. Government Relations Director Claudette Moody, standing, notes that seven members of her eight-member staff have bachelor's degrees and five of those also have earned master's degrees. A sixth staffer will start a master's program this summer. (6/14/01)

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## **Hollywood Bowl Service Resumes June 16; Some Discount, Free Tickets Available**

By GARY WOSK

Metro shuttle bus service to the Hollywood Bowl will begin operation for Jazz Festival performances on June 16 and 17 and for performances scheduled at the Bowl June 23 and 24. The 2001 season begins June 29.

And this year, the deal includes discount concert tickets.

Discounts of 20 percent will be offered to passengers, including MTA employees, who present a Metro pass, bus transfer or rail ticket at the Hollywood Bowl box office. The discount is good for bench seat sections for any performance listed in a brochure now being circulated on buses and trains.

Transportation on Line 163 from Hollywood/Vine to the Hollywood Bowl will begin three hours before each performance at intervals of every 20 minutes.

The last shuttle bus will leave the station 30 minutes before showtime. Return trips to the station start 20 minutes after the show and continue until approximately 11:45 p.m.

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## MTA Mosaic



- **Public Affairs Events, Tours Combine Fun and Safety**

TEXT AND PHOTOS  
BY RICH MORALLO

**Happy faces, happy travelers** - Students from **Heritage Elementary School**, above, in Phelan, and **Francis Willard School**, at right, in Rosemead had fun visiting Metro Rail and learning about the value of public transit to families on May 24.



Students from **Wilson Elementary School** near the Metro Green Line Long Beach Station traveled on all three Metro Rail lines to visit Union Station and learn about the transit system's safety features on June 1.

Transportation Planning Manager **David Mieger** explains how the MTA identifies routes for rail and bus projects in congested areas ...



... while Public Arts Officer **Laurie Garriss** opens a pamphlet that describes the artwork along the Metro Blue Line, during a visit by members of the services-oriented **Public Allies** and of the **Homeless Writers Coalition**.

The MTA started its train safety education outreach campaign in East Los Angeles with presentations on how students can keep safe near

tracks and trains at **Soto Elementary School** on May 25, 2001.



MTA train safety volunteers Heather Denette, left, and Cristine Coronado brought the "Look, Listen and Live" message to **Soccerfest** held before the L.A. vs New England game on May 26 at the Rosebowl in Pasadena. Los Angeles won, 2-0.

MTA train safety volunteer Cristine Coronado explains how to be safe near tracks and trains to a young visitor at **Soccerfest**.



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**STANDARD BEARERS** - New officers raise the banner of the MTA Toastmasters as the reign of FY2000 draws to a close. New president **Pauline Lee**, foreground left, is flanked by steadfast membership that includes, front row from left, **Maritza Torres**, **Roseann Sanchez**, and outgoing chief and new division governor **Frank Clarke**. Back row, from left, includes new area governor **Kathleen Johnson**, **Gene Hargreaves**, **Patrick Pan**, **Keith Hanson** and incoming treasurer **Thomas Traylor**. Not pictured: Club officers **George Lee, Jr.**, membership; **Dorothy Dunson**, secretary; **Diana Estrada**, public relations, and **Andre Villasenor**, education.

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**In the Navy:** While his Arthur Winston Division 5 co-workers looked on, May 30, Mechanic Solomon Moala, 32, was sworn into the U.S. Naval Reserve by Lieut. Cmdr. Brent Pashal of the Naval and Marine Corps Reserve Center in San Pedro. As an ex-Seabee with nine years' service, Moala will regain his former rank as a Construction Mechanic First Class. During his Navy career, Moala – a native of American Samoa – served in such duty stations as Guam and Puerto Rico; Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; Rota, Spain, and Norfolk, Va. He joined the MTA in November 1996. Moala and his wife, Brigitte, live in Anaheim with their six children: Moylon, 12; Joe, 11; Monique, 10; Matthew, 9; Zacharius, 3; and Zarius, 1. (6/11/01)

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## Funeral Services for David Dominguez Set Tuesday

### IN MEMORIUM



David Dominguez

(June 4, 2001) David D. Dominguez, 53, a former assistant to the General Manager of the SCRTD, died May 31 of liver complications. A funeral mass is scheduled Tuesday, June 5.

Dominguez was employed by the SCRTD from 1979 to the merger in April, 1993. At that time, he was serving as assistant to General Manager Alan Pegg.

Viewing is scheduled from 4 p.m. until 7 p.m., Monday, June 4, at Layben Mortuary, 5161 Arbor Road, Long Beach. A funeral mass will be celebrated at 11 a.m., Tuesday, June 5, at Our Lady of Refuge Church, 5195 E. Sterns, Long Beach.

In lieu of flowers, the family is requesting donations in memory of David D. Dominguez to the National Institute of Transplantation Liver Center fund, 2200 West 3rd St., Los Angeles, 90057, 213-484-7111.

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## Seminar Will Train Managers, Supervisors on Employee Discipline Process



Mike Harris of Division 10, Maria Reynolds of Division 8 and Brady Branstetter of Division 20 discuss the MTA's discipline rules with instructor Irma Rodriguez Moisa, right, during a break in the training session.

(June 4, 2001) All managers and supervisors need to understand how to follow due process when addressing employee discipline actions, says Chief Labor Relations Officer Brenda Diederichs, not just those who supervise union workers.

So, Diederichs has scheduled a second session of "Discipline: Putting it into Practice," a three-hour seminar for managers and supervisors. The training session is scheduled from 9 a.m. until noon, June 7, in the Board room. The first

session, May 23, drew some 50 participants.

"This training gives managers and supervisors better skills to deal with employees in a consistent and fair way that protects both the employee and the manager," says Diederichs. "We're teaching them to follow the law."

The seminar covers the use of evaluations as a tool to address employee performance issues, common disciplinary problems, investigating employee misconduct and determining appropriate disciplinary actions, among other topics.

Irma Rodriguez Moisa, a labor and employment law attorney with the Los Angeles law firm of Liebert Cassidy Whitmore, teaches the course. "She's lively, entertaining and full of good, relevant information," says Diederichs.

Each manager or supervisor who attends the seminar will receive a manual with guidelines and other information about the how to apply due process in disciplinary proceedings.

Managers and supervisors who are interested in attending the training session should contact Ed Cabrera, 922-7010, for reservations.

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Victoria Simiele, 13, at right, daughter of the MTA's Anthony Simiele, at left, is all-smiles during graduation, last Saturday, from Antelope Valley College.  
PHOTO BY LES TEAL

## **MTA's Anthony Simiele and Daughter, 13, Graduate from College**

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(June 4, 2001) It was a family affair, last Saturday, when Division 8 mechanic Anthony Simiele and his daughter, Victoria, graduated together - *magna cum laude* - from Antelope Valley College in Lancaster. Anthony is 41. Victoria is 13.

The unusual father-daughter team, who took some classes together, each earned associate's degrees from the community college.

"It feels good to earn a degree and to be graduating with my daughter is a nice coincidence," says Simiele, a resident of Littlerock and a 17-year MTA veteran.

Along with a 13-year-old classmate, Christina Brown of Palmdale, Victoria is in a tiny group of young teens who attend college. Last year only 11 kids their age were among the 60,000 graduates of California 108 community colleges.

Victoria, who has completed more than 100 units, expects to earn a second associate's degree next year.

### **They value education**

Simiele and his wife, Diane Asbury, a nurse, value education and have gone to some lengths to help their daughter fulfill her educational ambitions.

When Victoria became bored with her sixth-grade classes in the gifted program at Antelope Elementary School, they allowed her to enroll at Antelope Valley to study Chinese and computer science. Later, she and her mother took classes at Pierce College and at Moorpark College.

Despite her advanced education, Simiele reports that Victoria is a "regular girl." She enjoys skateboarding, basketball and animals. She wants to be either a veterinarian or a computer graphics designer.

"Victoria's very much a part of the decision-making process about her life and her education," says Simiele. "What career choices she wants to make, what pace and what school she wants to go to after Antelope Valley College."

### **Uncertainties of the merger**

The uncertainties surrounding the MTA merger in 1993 and the layoffs that followed underscored Simiele's interest in furthering his own education.

"When I was downsized out of Division 6 that made me want to get more education," he says. "Now, I'm getting a degree and that gives me more security."

He also is concerned about how his job might be affected by efforts to form a separate San Fernando Valley transit agency that would assume responsibility for much of the MTA's operation in the Valley.

"I've tried to impress on my daughter that no job is secure and that when change happens, you need all the education you can get," he says. "We should all get as much education as possible."

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**CRAGIN FAREWELL:** CEO Julian Burke presented a commemorative plaque, last Friday, to James Cragin of Gardena, in appreciation for his eight years' service on the MTA Board. Joining Cragin for a farewell luncheon were, from left, Howard Sachar, James Seal, Burke, Neal Bjornsen, Wes McCarns, CAC Chair Michael Dickerson, Bill Lotto, Mary Cragin, Peter Schick and Seymour Rosen. Cragin is a former mayor of Gardena and was a member of the City Council for almost 20 years. (6/5/01)

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**Budget Award:** The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has received a Certificate of Recognition for Budget Preparation from the Government Finance Officers Association. The national organization also has selected the MTA to receive its Distinguished Budget Presentation Award. The awards reflect the commitment of the agency and staff to "meeting the highest principles of governmental budgeting." OMB members shown here with Deputy Executive Officer Carolyn Flowers, center, are Ceiwyn Moore, Chris Gallanes, Shirley Glover, Richard Davis, Michael Funnye, Fe Dalida, Melinda Perrier, Carolyn Drummond, Karen Kern, Kevin Tvedt, Yolanda Leal, Jacquenette Terry, Melissa Wang, Frank Shapiro, April McKay, Mark Simpson, John McCamy, Stan Foreman, Norm Stabeck, Bill Wong and Bill Kimutis. Not shown are Andrew Lee, Linnea Berg, Anne Adelman and Eric Domio. (6/5/01)

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## Providing Dental Care for Philippines' Poor Was an Emotional Experience



Rose Sanchez, a supervising auditor in Internal Audit, and Jerry Ramos, an auditor in the Project Audit Group, look over an album of photos taken during their dental mission to the Philippines.

- [Photo Gallery](#)

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(June 6, 2001) Tears glisten in Rose Sanchez's eyes when she tells the story. Jerry Ramos also becomes emotional. When more than 500 poor people in their Philippine homeland crammed a one-day dental clinic the two helped set up in April, the experience was heartrending.

Ramos, Sanchez and Mel Rivera – all MTA auditors – worked with the Sorooptimist International service club to arrange the dental mission for indigent residents of Meycauayan, Balucan, a town some 40 miles north of Manila.

Although only one member of a family was entitled to attend the April 29 clinic, whole families came seeking treatment. Many required extensive dental care. Others, suffering from infections, were given antibiotics and promised free treatment later by the local dentists.

"I saw one patient who had nine teeth pulled that day," says Ramos, who lived as a child in a town on the northern tip of Luzon. "That's unbelievable to us."

### A 'quasi-pharmacist'

Sanchez, a native of Bataan, was assigned as a "quasi-pharmacist" to work under the supervision of the medical doctors. "After the patients were treated and given prescriptions, they would come to my table where I had the medications, all marked and packaged."

Rivera, who hails from a town south of Manila, and Sanchez's husband, Ricky, were responsible for arranging and maintaining the clinic's equipment and facilities. They also handled crowd control,



Rose Sanchez explains a prescription to two young patients who came to the dental clinic for treatment.

### Rose Sanchez Volunteered with a 'Servant's Heart'

By ROSE SANCHEZ

I would summarize my experience on the dental mission to the Philippines in a few words: overwhelming and inwardly gratifying.

Immediately after my husband, Ricky, and I decided that we would volunteer for the mission, we prepared our minds to go with a servant's heart. And as it turned out, it was an awesome experience that I will treasure for the rest of my earthly life.

I was able to serve the poor in a way that I would never have expected to by myself alone! I listened with patience, gave a lot of compassion and love, and shared with the children even the smallest stuff I had (gum, candies, anything fun).

The smiles and joy I received back from those around me became an unexpected blessing to me. I realized then that it is not about what you can or cannot do, but

helped with registration and made sure the area stayed clean.

Twenty U.S. dentists, including Ramos' wife, Editha, partnered with 10 Filipino dentists to operate the makeshift clinic, which was set up at a Meycauayan school. Thirty graduating dental students and two medical doctors joined the dentists, who are members of the Manila Central University Alumni Association.

what HE can do through you!  
To top it all... we were blessed with the most wonderful host, Atty. Henry and Mrs. Linnabelle Ruth Villarica, who gave us their unconditional hospitality and kindness.

Ramos coordinated the event with his sister, Linnabelle Villarica, president of the Meycauayan Soroptimist International club, who brought along some 20 chapter members. Local dentists provided 20 dental chairs, drills and other equipment, although each dentist brought his or her own instruments.

### Donations of cash, medicines

The U.S. group, who paid their own way to the Philippines, spent months before the dental mission receiving cash contributions and donations of medicine samples and other supplies.

"By the time we were ready to go, we had raised a minimum of \$7,000 to buy many of the things we needed for the mission," says Ramos.

The April event was the second mission to the Philippines for Ramos. In January, 2000, he participated in a medical mission to Meycauayan with a group of doctors and nurses who treated more than 3,000 patients in one day. He's now thinking about the fund-raising needed for what next year could be a joint medical-dental mission.

For Sanchez, the April mission was an unforgettable experience. "It was overwhelming," she says. "I was really touched to be able to help my poor countrymen. We were God-sent to them."



### GALLERY



Clockwise from above left:

1. Some 500 residents of Meycauayan, Balucan, attended the Soroptimist International dental mission's volunteer clinic.
2. A Soroptimist volunteer takes a patient's blood pressure as the MTA's Rose Sanchez makes notes.
3. Working under less-than-ideal conditions, a dentist treats a patient as a volunteer holds the young man's head steady.
4. All lined up to assist patients at the dental clinic are MTA employees Jerry Ramos (third from left), Rose Sanchez (center, seated) and Mel Rivera (right).
5. A volunteer dentist works on a young patient in the makeshift dental clinic.

PHOTOS BY MEL RIVERA



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Last year's Metro Rail opening drew unprecedented crowds to NoHo Festival

## **MTA Promotes Metro Rail for Travel To Noho Theatre & Arts Festival**

By ED SCANNELL

(June 7, 2001) With gasoline prices still hovering around the \$2 per gallon mark, the MTA is promoting Metro Rail as the perfect way to reach the NoHo Theatre & Arts Festival, scheduled June 16 and 17, from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Now in its ninth year, the NoHo Theatre & Arts Festival's free celebration of the arts takes place on Lankershim Boulevard between Cumpston Street and Magnolia Boulevard. The second largest festival in the City of Los Angeles, this year's festival promises to deliver a feast for the senses.

The festival will include free performances at 14 local theatres. Avant garde art will be on display.

A main stage at the north end of the festival will highlight well-known entertainers, while another main stage at the south end will be dedicated to an eclectic mix of rock n' roll tribute bands, pop and jazz dance, body painting, a selection of exotic animals and much more.

This year's festival will be marked by the return of the highly popular children's area, Kid's Kourt, an activity area where children can see magic, listen to storytelling, paint, watch a play or meet cartoon characters.

More than 200 booths will be featured this year. In addition to a wide variety of arts, crafts and commercial items, food vendors will feature a panoply of cuisines from traditional to ethnic to gourmet.

Last year's festival coincided with the opening of the Metro Red Line North Hollywood extension and attracted a quarter-million people. With Metro Rail ridership soaring to new heights, festival organizers are looking toward another record-breaking crowd.

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## Bus Rodeo Prelims Set June 13–16



- **Finals on June 23 at Santa Anita**

(June 7, 2001) Some of the Metro Bus system's best operators will test themselves against a complex obstacle course at Santa Anita Race Track, June 13 –16, during qualifying rounds for the 26th MTA Bus Rodeo.

Those who make the cut will return for the Rodeo, June 23, to compete for prizes and the honor of representing the MTA at the American Public Transit Association (APTA) finals in Philadelphia in September.

Also competing at the June 23 Rodeo will be teams of mechanics who will try to best each other in diagnosing and repairing a difficult series of engine and systems problems. The winning team also will represent the MTA at the APTA finals.

Division 1 bus operator Samuel Morales won last year's Bus Rodeo, scoring 620 out of 650 possible points. The Division 9 "Men in White" mechanic team of Albert Semadeni, Berry Richter, Edward Rivera and Pete Baeza (alternate), won the maintenance competition. The group represented the MTA at the APTA finals in San Francisco.

This year's MTA Bus Rodeo promises to be the biggest and best yet. Employees, their families and friends are invited to attend the 7:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. event, June 23, at Santa Anita.

Activities will include a car show by members of the Rapid Transit Club, a raffle, vendor booths, food and beverages – and, of course, the exciting driving and maintenance competitions.

For information about the Rodeo and event pre-registration, contact Carlos Rojas at 922-5160, Freddy Steger at 922-5779, Lanny Hoel at 922-6641 or Harold Torres at 922-5802.

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## 500 Gather on Plaza to Enjoy Farmers Market, Barbecue Lunch

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(June 8, 2001) Almost 500 employees soaked up the sun – and a little barbecue sauce – during Metro Café's first Farmers Market and barbecue picnic on the Plaza, Thursday.

The event was such a success, says cafeteria manager Bruce Ueno, he's tentatively planning another in mid-July. Counting those who ate barbecue and those who ate in the cafeteria, his crew served about 1,900 customers – some 400 more than are served on a normal Thursday.

Although the day had started out overcast, by noon the Plaza was warm and sunny. Smoke from the outdoor grill curled around the busy chefs who tended the chicken, ribs, burgers, roast corn and hot dogs and waited on hungry customers.

Some stood in line for 30 minutes or more to get their lunches, but found the wait was worth it. They could smell the barbecue cooking and they were entertained by the music of Transit Security Manager Dennis Flowers.

### Conversation was limited

Once the diners sat down to eat, conversation was limited. But, remarks by the few diners who didn't have a mouthful included..."The potato salad is really good..."The ribs are nice and tender..."It's good, the ribs, baked beans, cole slaw and potato salad..."

Nearby, employees picked through the Farmers Market selection of fresh fruits, vegetables and cut flowers. Prices, they found, were reasonable.

"I bought some wonderful fresh fruit – grapes, oranges, strawberries – so I can make a great tropical fruit salad when I get home," said Benita Horne of HR



Jody Feerst checks out the fresh fruit at the Farmers Market.



There wasn't much room for conversation as employees turned their attention to the barbecue lunch.



Phyllis Meng pays for her Farmers Market selections.

Development & Training. "Only \$6 and I'll have fruit for a whole week."

Ueno says he'll make some changes for the next Farmers Market and barbecue, including arranging food service so customers needn't wait so long. He also will set up the produce display more efficiently and have a separate cashier so customers can move through more quickly.

"We had some glitches this time – including two workers who called in sick and a backup cash register that broke down," Ueno said. "It was Murphy's Law at work, but our goal is to improve each time we do this."

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Employees took time to look over the selection of fresh fruits and vegetables.



Cafeteria workers kept the barbecue grills hot and smoking as they turned out delicious meals.

PHOTOS BY BILL HEARD

## In Memorium



**Robert Spradley**

### **Robert Spradley of Facilities Maintenance Dies After Long Illness**

(June 8, 2001) Robert Spradley, a Facilities Maintenance supervisor, died June 7 following a lengthy illness. He was 63 and had been with the MTA for 10 years.

"For those of us who knew and worked with Bob over the years," wrote Richard Hunt, deputy executive officer, Bus Maintenance, "we will miss his congenial personality, humor and warm smiles."

Spradley is survived by his two adult daughters, Rebecca Spradley and Kelly Bowling. Funeral services will be private.

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## Local Media Views MTA's New CNG Buses During Tour of RRC

By GARY WOSK

(June 8, 2001) MTA Board Chair Yvonne Burke and other MTA officials led reporters on a tour of the agency's high-tech central maintenance facility, June 7, to view some of the 30 new buses the MTA is receiving each week and readying for service.

In a 15-month period from April 2001 forward, the MTA will receive 750 new buses, all powered by clean-burning CNG engines with low-floor designs that make boarding and exiting easier for the elderly and disabled.

The buses also come equipped with on board surveillance cameras to deter crime.

"With the MTA taking delivery of so many new buses, it's no wonder the MTA has been cited as one of the 10 most-improved public transit systems in North America," said Burke.

She was referring to an article that recently ran in Metro Magazine, a publication that covers the public transportation industry as well as private bus companies.

"Besides replacing older, less reliable buses, the MTA also is expanding service. You can see the difference on the street," she added.

The MTA has taken delivery of more than 1,200 new compressed natural gas buses since 1996 and has increased the number of buses in service by 377.

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PHOTOS BY LUIS INZUNZA



New arrivals



MTA Board Chair  
Yvonne Brathwaite Burke



MTA Mechanic José Vargas

## **Pam O'Connor to Represent League of Cities on MTA Board**



**Pam O'Connor**

By ED SCANNELL

(June 8, 2001) Pam O'Connor, a member of the Santa Monica City Council, was named, June 7, to represent the League of California Cities on the MTA Board of Directors. She will be sworn in later this month.

O'Connor was nominated April 12, by the Los Angeles County City Selection Committee to fill the seat vacated by former Gardena City Council member James Cragin, who held the MTA seat since 1993. O'Connor joins three other City Selection Committee appointees on the 13-member MTA Board.

A regular user of public transit who neither owns nor leases a car, O'Connor has served on the Santa Monica City Council since 1994 and served as mayor in 1997 and 1999.

She also has served as a member of the National League of Cities, Women in Municipal Government board, and on its information technology and communications steering committee; Southern California Association of Governments' Regional Council; League of California Cities, transportation and public works committee; and on the board of the Local Government Commission.

### **Specializes in historical preservation**

In addition to serving on the Santa Monica City Council, O'Connor works as a private consultant with Kaplan Chen Kaplan, specializing in historic preservation.

O'Connor's consulting projects have included the Rowan Building in the Los Angeles Spring Street Historic District, and seismic projects for the Los Angeles City Hall rehabilitation, USC's historic buildings, and UCLA's historic buildings.

O'Connor has received numerous awards, including the California Preservation Foundation Design Awards for California State University's Channel Islands Campus (2000) and UCLA's Powell Library (1997), as well as the Milton Marks Award for Outstanding Achievement in Historic Preservation (1999).

O'Connor earned a bachelor of science degree in journalism from Southern Illinois University and holds masters degrees in historic preservation planning and in technology management from Eastern Michigan University.

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The 12 RRC employees recognized for top performance were (front row) **Ivan Rodriguez**, Paint Shop; **Douglas Campbell**, Weld Shop; **Frank Castro**, Electrical Shop; **Lupe Ibarra**, Running Repair (first shift); **Antonio Ojeda**, Mechanical Shop; and **Ismael Navarro**, Transmission Line. Back row, **Steve Cabrera**, Paint Shop; **Robert Pfile**, Running Repair (second shift); **Donald Chui**, Engine Line; **Donald Caswell**, Systems Shop; **Hermilo Madera**, Body Shop; and **Dora Vega**, Quality and Reliability.

## RRC Recognizes Top Performers for the Quarter

By MARIA LASCO

(June 8, 2001) The Regional Rebuild Center (RRC) recognized 12 employees for their outstanding efforts during the last quarter, March to May 2001.

All were chosen for recognition by peers from their assigned shops, based on their ability to work well with co-workers, their valuable contributions to the shop, superior service, congenial attitude, and other personal and professional qualities. Also, each employee had perfect attendance with no record of discipline during the period.

Among the 12 winners, Robert Pfile was awarded the overall RRC Employee of the Quarter. Robert is a Mechanic in the Running Repair Shop for the second shift.

According to Alfred Lozano, his supervisor, Robert exemplifies a model employee because he works' above and beyond what is required of him. He is extremely dependable as shown by his attendance and work ethic.



'Employee of the Quarter **Robert Pfile**, Mechanic, and Supervisor **Alfred Lozano**

### Excellent job performance

The quality of his work is excellent, as is his job performance. He's willing to go the extra mile with his own work and is willing to work with others to help achieve the goals of the shop. He is a team player in all respects.

Each Shop Employee of the Quarter was provided a parking space near the shop, received a \$50 gift certificate and plaque of recognition. Additionally, the RRC Employee of the Quarter received a jacket, \$100 gift certificate, special award of recognition, and BBQ/lunch fund for his shop.

The goal of the RRC Employee of the Quarter program is to recognize the top performers in each shop and reward them with incentives that they

can enjoy and share with their families or co-workers.

Employee recognition and incentives help build teamwork, create a motivated and productive workforce, and improve attendance. Supervisors and shop representatives worked together to develop the program and promote employee participation.

They obtained input from all levels of their respective departments to determine what employees value and wanted for the program.

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### **SoCal Transit Advocates Schedule Seminar at MTA HQ**

(June 11, 2001) The Southern California Transit Advocates is sponsoring a seminar from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., Thursday June 14, on Rail Transit Systems and Project Implementation.

The meeting, which is open to MTA employees and the public, will be held in the Board Overflow room at MTA Headquarters.

A representative of Siemens Transportation Systems, Inc., will give a presentation on light rail, commuter rail and design-build-operate-maintain projects. Others speakers also may make presentations.

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**Co-Workers of Jesse  
Castorena Seeking  
TOWP Donations for  
Cancer Fight**



Jesse Castorena

By PETER FREEMAN

(June 12, 2001) Friends and co-workers of Jesse Castorena, Transportation Manager at Division 1, are asking for donations of TOWP to help in his fight against cancer.

A recent gall bladder surgery uncovered pancreatic cancer. Pancreas surgery was performed successfully Monday, June 11. Castorena is in intensive care and his recovery is expected to be a lengthy process.

Due to recent family emergencies, Castorena's TOWP bank has been severely depleted. Any assistance would be greatly appreciated.

Please remember Jesse and his family in your prayers during this very serious surgical procedure. For further information, contact Sue Harvey, Division 1 acting manager at 922-6201.

For information on how to make TOWP donations, contact Reginnia Kaping of Human Resources at 922-7127. HR Policy 7-2, Paragraph 1.6 in [the policies and procedures page on the Human Resources Intranet site](#) explains donations of TOWP. A link to the donation form is provided in the policy.

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**Financial Report Award:** (June 13, 2001) The MTA's Accounting Department has won a national Certificate of Achievement for Excellence for its annual financial report. The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) said the award "...is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment...." The award is the second the GFOA has given the MTA this year. Earlier, the Office of Management and Budget was honored for budget preparation and presentation.

Pictured here are (front row, left) Basil Panas, Josie Nicasio and Harvey Saulter. Second row, left, Tom Formoso Rene Decena, Benny Lorenzo, Alex Perez and Bill Hesser. Third row, left, Perry Blake, Manuel Villalobos, Bill Bassett and David Wakeling. Not shown: Christian Baldemor and Rosa Garcia-Gonzalez.

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**Number of  
Metro Art  
Docents  
to Triple Following  
Apprenticeship**



Metro Art Docent Susan Zagha leads tour of Vermont Sunset Metro Rail Station.

By GARY WOSK

(June 13, 2001) MTA this summer will triple the number of its Metro Art docents – that group of volunteers who lead free public tours of the artworks found throughout the Metro Rail system.

The 26 soon-to-be docents, presently undergoing a 40-hour apprenticeship program, will join the 12 tour group leaders already on the job. The training program takes volunteers behind the scenes of the broad range of art in the Metro Rail system and provides insights into the artists.

Once trained, the newly fledged docents will conduct two-hour tours of the art and architecture featured at 50 light-rail and subway stations.

The volunteers, who range in age from the late 20s to late 60s and include a doctor, a waitress, a law student and a art history major, were inspired by newspaper articles about the docent program and by the Metro Art tours they took.

"I was very relieved and glad people were inspired by the articles," said MTA Docent Program Coordinator Robin Izon. "The response was overwhelming, and the group is very diverse."

### **Shorter waiting period for tours**

According to Izon, the waiting period for weekday tours will drop from six weeks to three weeks. Additional weekend tours will be offered as well. The number of tours scheduled each month will increase from five to approximately 15.

During the 15-week apprenticeship program, volunteers meet the artists, learn how they were chosen for the project, the challenges they faced, the ins-and-outs of the creative process, and how the artwork is funded and maintained.

Following their apprenticeship, volunteers will lead a minimum of 12 tours a year of selected segments of the 59.4 mile system.

The 50 Metro Rail stations and Gateway Transit Center feature the work of more than 75 artists commissioned to enhance the transit system in one of the country's largest and most celebrated public art programs.

Since the program's inception in August 1999, docents have led 165 tours of various segments of Metro Rail, which translates into nearly 4,600



people. The MTA is believed to be the first transit agency to benefit from such a program.

Free tours for groups of 15 or more (maximum 60) are available by request. To reserve a Metro Art guided tour, or for more information, members of the public may call 922-4278.

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## **Westside Urban Forum to Honor Metro Rapid Project**

(June 13, 2001) The Westside Urban Forum will honor the MTA's Metro Rapid bus project for "...planning, technical and design innovation (in) public transportation..." at a luncheon Friday, June 15.

The award is one of only five the organization, which represents real estate, planning, transportation and environmental interests, will present this year.

Others to be honored are the Baldwin Hills Park project, the LAX Gateway 2000 project, the Bergamot Station Arts Complex and the Griffith Observatory renovation.

Rex Gephart, Metro Rapid project manager will represent the MTA at the Forum luncheon. Martha Welborne of the Surface Transit Project and Doug Suisman of Susman Urban Design – both of whom were instrumental in the project – also will be recognized.

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## **New Law to Equalize 401(k) and 457 Plans; Double Contributions**



(June 14, 2001) Beginning Jan. 1, 2002, MTA employees not only can belong to both the 401(k) and 457 savings plans, but also can more than double the amount of money they're allowed to sock away for retirement.

Those are only two of the benefits in a comprehensive tax reform bill President Bush signed into law earlier this month. And, for the first time, it makes the 457 Plan as flexible as the 401(k) Plan.

Under the new law, employees may contribute up to \$11,000 annually in either the 401(k) Plan or the 457 Plan – or into both, for a total of \$22,000. The contributions limit will increase \$1,000 a year until it reaches \$15,000 for each plan, a total of \$30,000, in 2006.

After 2006, when the plans will be linked to the Consumer Price Index, the contribution limits will automatically increase.

### **Raises contribution limits**

Another new provision of the law taking effect in January will permit employees to contribute up to 100 percent of their gross compensation into the savings plans. Currently, such contributions are limited to 25 percent of an employee's gross compensation.

Members of the 401(k) and 457 plans who are over age 50 may contribute up to \$12,000 annually beginning Jan. 1, 2002. The limit will increase each year until 2006, topping out at \$16,000 per year – \$32,000 per year for members of both plans.

Funds deposited in either plan as of Jan. 1, 2002, may be rolled over, tax free, into an IRA account if the employee leaves the MTA prior to retirement. The funds also may be left in the plans following separation.

Because contribution limits to the 457 Plan have always lagged behind the 401(k) Plan, employees who are eligible to retire within three years have an opportunity to "catch-up" their 457 Plan contributions.

### **Contributing to both plans**

These employees will be able to contribute up to \$22,000 annually in the 457 Plan over a three-year period, while also contributing \$11,000 to the 401(k) plan – a total of \$33,000.

The limit will increase \$2,000 per year until 2006, when employees in the "catch up" program will be allowed to put \$30,000 in a 457 Plan and \$15,000 in a 401(k) plan, for a total of \$45,000 a year.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2002, distribution of funds placed in a 457 Plan will be just as flexible as those placed in a 401(k) account. For example, members of the 457 Plan can put their funds into a 401(k).

For more information about 401(k) and 457 plans, call Erick Spencer of ICMA at 800-735-7202, Ext. 5941, or log on to the ICMA web site at [www.icmarc.org](http://www.icmarc.org). Spencer is available each Wednesday from 9:30 a.m. until 4 p.m. in the Pension and Benefits Department. The remainder of the month, he rotates among the operating divisions.

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### **'Take Our Sons to Work Day' is Friday, June 29**

(June 18, 2001) The MTA is inviting the sons of employees to participate in the fourth annual "Take Our Sons to Work Day" on Friday, June 29. This year's theme is "A Summer Day at the MTA."

Employees are encouraged to bring their sons, ages 9 – 15, to take part in the events planned from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at MTA Headquarters and at the operating divisions.

Activities will emphasize the positive, life-long benefits young men receive by accompanying adults to work for a day, according to Human Resources Development and Training (HRD&T).

The program will include a welcome by CEO Julian Burke, a panel discussion with the MTA's Arthur Winston and other employees, tours of various administrative departments, bus and rail transportation and maintenance facilities.

[Click to  
Download  
Schedule](#)

### **Introduction to careers**

"Take our Sons to Work Day" was designed to mirror the national "Take our Daughters to Work Day" program sponsored by the Ms. Foundation. Both events provide opportunities to introduce young people to careers in transportation.

HRD&T needs volunteer chaperones in various work locations to escort boys whose parents may not be able to leave their work locations during "Take Our Sons to Work Day." Chaperones must have approval of their immediate supervisor to participate.

Employees who plan to bring a son to work, June 29, must complete the form in the attached document. The deadline for submitting the completed form is Wednesday, June 20.

[Click to  
Download  
Registration  
Form](#)

For more information about "Take our Sons to Work Day," contact Cynthia Shavers at 922-2264 or at shaversc@mta.net.

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## **Cancer Takes Eyes of 6-Year-Old Elsa; Blood Donors Needed**

By GINETTE HAWKINS

(June 19, 2001) Elsa is a 6-year-old girl who now is blind as the result of retinoblastoma, a life-threatening cancer of the eyes that occurs in young children. Earlier this month, doctors at Children's Hospital removed both of Elsa's eyes.

Elsa is the daughter of Division 15 Operator Edward Carbajal. She is a patient at Children's Hospital in Los Angeles, but is recovering at home following her operation.

[More about retinoblastoma](#)  
A Parent's Guide

Elsa recently received a bone marrow transplant and, for some time to come, will be using a lot of blood products. She will require both red blood cells and platelets until her new bone marrow starts working.

Elsa's family is asking for your help, as there is an ongoing blood shortage in Los Angeles. Kathy Reger, who is responsible for blood donor recruitment at Children's Hospital, says there are two separate processes MTA employees can help with.

### **Blood Donation**

The process of donating blood would require each employee to spend approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour at the hospital's Donor Center. The Center can screen each donor, by phone beforehand, to make sure they are able to donate blood. That would only take a few minutes. At the hospital, each qualified donor will have to fill out a questionnaire.

### **Platelets Donation**

The process of platelets donation requires that a donor spend approximately two hours at the Donor Center. During this time, each donor will have to fill out a questionnaire. The donor will have one needle in each arm for an hour and 45 minutes.

### **Transportation**

Children's Hospital can provide a van to drive interested employees to the Donor Center and then back to MTA Headquarters. The center is located at 4560 Sunset Blvd.

The center is open for blood donations, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. and on Saturdays from 8 a.m. until noon. Platelets donations are taken, Monday through Friday, from 7:30 a.m. until 3 p.m.

To donate blood or platelets for Elsa Carbajal, call the Children's Hospital Blood Donor Center at (323) 669-2441 for an appointment or for further information.

Ginette Hawkins is an administrative intern in the Human Resources' Work/Life Program. She is a second-year graduate student at USC where she is studying industrial social work.

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**SAVE THE DATE:** Employees are invited to discuss the wage increase and the proposed retirement benefits at a Brown Bag lunch with Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky, Chief Financial Officer Richard Brumbaugh and the Executive Officer of Finance, Terry Matsumoto, in the Gateway Conference Room at **noon, Wednesday, June 20.**

## 2.85% Pay Hike Due July 1

- **New Medical and Retirement Benefit Plans Go to Board**

In this report:

[Retiree Medical Benefits](#)

[Revised Non-Contract Pension Plan](#)

(June 19, 2001) CEO Julian Burke has announced that – effective July 1, 2001 – non-contract regular and temporary employees who receive an overall rating of Effective, Commendable or Outstanding for their job performance in FY 2001 will receive a 2.85 percent pay increase. The raise will be reflected in the August 15, 2001 paychecks.

The pay increase will be granted even if an employee is over his or her pay range. The Board of Directors approved the pay increase earlier this year when they approved the FY 2002 budget.

See also:  
[Committee  
Items on  
June  
Agenda](#)

This year's raise will be accompanied by a new Performance-Based Compensation (PBC) program that will provide additional pay increases for employees who achieved Outstanding or Commendable ratings for their job performance in FY 2001.

Each Executive Officer will be allocated a PBC pool of funds to divide among employees who are eligible for PBC increases. Managers and supervisors are currently being trained in new employee evaluation procedures linked to the PBC program. All performance reviews must be completed no later than July 16, 2001.

### Retiree Medical Benefits

The staff is recommending substantial improvements in the non-contract employees' retiree medical plan.

The proposed changes to the plan would only affect employees who retire after July 1, 2001. The Board is expected to consider the plan at its June 28 meeting.

Under the proposed retiree medical plan, the MTA would contribute 4 percent per year of service of the agency's share of the cost of the medical plan selected by the employee. The retired employee would continue to bear the full active employee share (if any) of the medical plan he or she selected.

For an employee who retires with 15 years' service, for example, the MTA would contribute 60 percent of the employer's share of the medical premium cost (4% x 15 years = 60%). Employees with at least five years' service would become eligible for this benefit at age 50.

The proposed retiree medical plan also reduces the age and years of service at which a non-contract employee would become eligible for Medicare Part B reimbursements.

If approved by the Board, employees who are age 50 and have at least five years' service would be eligible for the plan. The rules now in effect for former SCRTD employees and for those hired after the 1993 merger require an employee to be age 55 and have at least 10 years of service.

All active non-contract employees would be automatically enrolled in the proposed plan. All new non-contract employees hired after the plan is expected to be adopted – July 1, 2001 – would be eligible for the plan. The plan would not reduce benefits for any current, former or retired employee, should the retiree be eligible for a better benefit under a previous plan.

Improving the retiree medical benefits is expected to help the MTA attract and retain qualified employees and make the agency competitive in the job market with the City and County of Los Angeles.

### **Revised Non-Contract Pension Plan**

The staff also is recommending to the Board an improvement in the non-contract pension plan benefit formula. The proposed change would apply the PERS 2 percent at age 55 benefit tables for all non-contract service after July 1, 2001. It would not apply to service prior to that date.

For example, a non-contract employee who retires at age 60 in 2026 with 25 years' service under the proposed plan would receive 56.55 percent of final compensation compared to 50 percent under the current PERS 2 percent at age 60 formula.

The recommended plan would not change the service credits or annuity calculation that an employee may have earned in any other retirement plan prior to July 1, 2000 – such as the MTA Old Plan, the MTA New Plan or PERS 2 percent at age 60.

Old Plan members would have an opportunity to elect the 2 percent at age 55 benefit plan at any time up to their application for retirement.

Over time, the proposed pension plan change would equalize and improve non-contract pension benefits for all MTA and PTSC employees. Teamster employees also are included in the changes to the retiree medical and pension plans.

The improvements are expected to help the MTA recruit and retain employees in a competitive job market.

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**SAVE THE DATE:** MTA Bus Rodeo, Saturday, June 23, 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Santa Anita Race Track, Gate 6 off Colorado Place in Arcadia. Family fun, great food, classic cars and amazing competition among the MTA's top drivers and mechanics!



## 30 Operators, 10 Maintenance Teams to Compete in Saturday's Bus Rodeo

(June 20, 2001) After days of preliminary rounds in which sweating operators wrestled their buses through a difficult obstacle course, the field for this year's MTA Bus Rodeo has been narrowed from 195 to 30 competitors.

The Rodeo finals, scheduled Saturday, June 23, at Santa Anita Racetrack, should be exciting. In addition to the driving contest, maintenance teams from 10 divisions also will compete for the right to represent the MTA at the American Public Transit Association international finals in Philadelphia in September.

"The preliminaries went perfectly," says Frank Cecere, the transportation operations supervisor who runs the annual event. "There were no protests, no problems, and we ran on schedule every day."

Four bus operators scored more than 600 out of a possible 650 points in the preliminaries. Leading the pack are Conrad Noriega of Division 9, 629; Samuel Morales of Division 1, 624; Luduvico Castro of Division 9, 608 and Mark Holland of Division 9, 607.

Morales was the Rodeo winner in 2000, while Holland took first place in 1999. Down the list at Number 18, with 518 points, is Frederick Owens of Division 9, who took second place in the 2000 Rodeo.

Signed up for the maintenance competition are teams from divisions 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 15 and 18. The maintenance event includes diagnosing and correcting problems with braking, engine, transmission and power plant systems, as well as a bus inspection.

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**Go to:**

[Rodeo Top 30 List of Competitors](#)

**See also**

[...A Hoot and a Holler!](#)



(June 20, 2001) Roger Snoble has led Dallas Area Rapid Transit into the top tier of public transit agencies worldwide.

He is responsible for a transit system covering 13 cities over a 700-square mile area with bus, light rail, commuter rail, paratransit and high occupancy vehicle lanes.

The agency is now a recognized leader in multi-modal transportation system development and was named the American Public Transit Association's "Transit Agency of the Year" in 1997.

Snoble has received numerous industry awards, including the American Public Transit Association's "Transit Manager of the Year" in 1998; the "1999 Friend of Texas Transit Award," presented by Texas Department of Transportation to an outstanding public transit official.

See also:  
[Top Dallas Transit Official Picked to Head MTA in Los Angeles County](#)

**'Ten Best Managers' award**

He also won the "2000 Friend of Texas Transit," presented by Texas Department of Public Transportation; and was selected as one of Metro Magazine's "Ten Best Transit Managers in 2000."

As president/executive director, Snoble administers the goals and policies of the DART Board of Directors, which include the largest public transit expansion in North America.

He directs the activities of the agency's top managers and 2,750 employees, emphasizing a strong customer focus to ensure that transit riders and taxpayers receive the best transit service available.

Snoble also works closely with member city governments and the public in developing short- and long-term transportation and mobility goals.

**Length of Service**

January 1994 to present.

**Experience**

<i>President/Executive Director, Dallas Area Rapid Transit</i>	January 1994 - present
<i>President and General Manager, San Diego Transit Corporation</i>	1979-93
<i>Assistant General Manager, SDTC</i>	1977-79
<i>Manager of Transit Services, SDTC</i>	1975-77
<i>Manager of Planning and Scheduling, SDTC</i>	1973-75

*Manager of Schedules and Research,*  
Akron Metro Transit District, Canton, 1971-73  
OH

*Transportation Planner,* Stark County 1968-71  
Transportation Study, Canton, OH

*Planning Aide,* TriCounty Regional 1965-68  
Planning Commission, Akron, OH

**Professional/Academic**

*Board Member,* Dallas County Convention and  
Visitors Bureau  
*Board Member,* North Texas Commission  
*Board Member,* Dallas Zoological Society  
*Board Member,* McKinney Avenue Trolley Authority  
*Ex-officio Member,* Metroplex Mayors  
*Ex-officio Member,* Dallas Regional Mobility Coalition  
*Board Member,* American Public Transit Association  
*Past Chair,* California Transit Association  
*Guest Faculty,* University of California, Irvine

**Education**

Master of Arts, University of Akron  
Bachelor of Science, University of Akron  
Attended the British Transport Staff College, 1980

**Source:** Dallas Area Rapid Transit

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## Top Dallas Transit Official Picked to Head MTA in Los Angeles County



New MTA CEO  
Roger Snoble

See also:  
[Snoble Led DART to Top Tier of Transit Agencies](#)

(June 20, 2001) The MTA Board of Directors today hired Roger Snoble of Dallas, one of the top public transit officials in the nation, to become the MTA's new CEO effective in September. The Board's action was unanimous.

Snoble, 56, has been president/executive director of the Dallas Area Rapid Transit District (DART) since 1994. He will replace Julian Burke, who announced last January his plans to retire once a successor was selected. Burke has been the MTA CEO since August 1997.

Snoble's career in public transportation spans 36 years. Prior to joining DART he served as president and general manager of the San Diego Transit Corporation, where he worked for 20 years, rising in the ranks from planning and scheduling manager to the top executive post.

Snoble began his transportation career in 1965 as a planner for the TriCounty Regional Planning Commission in Akron. He also worked as a planner for Akron Metro Transit District from 1971-1973.

### Won numerous awards

The new MTA CEO has won numerous awards. The American Public Transit Association (APTA) named Snoble Transit Manager of the Year in 1998. Under Snoble's leadership, DART was cited by APTA as the Transit Agency of the Year in 1997.

Snoble was one of five finalists for the top transit post in Los Angeles County recruited in a nationwide search.

"Roger Snoble is widely regarded as one of the top transit executives in the nation," said MTA Board Chair and Los Angeles County Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke. "It was a real coup to recruit him. He was the only candidate who manages a transportation agency similar to MTA that operates a multi-modal transit system, builds infrastructure and also is responsible for regional transportation planning and programming."

Gordon Linton, former head of the Federal Transit Administration, agrees.

"Roger has been instrumental in the growth of the Dallas Metroplex," Linton said. "His skills and the respect he enjoys in the industry bodes well for the continued improvement and growth of the MTA in Los Angeles. I think Roger will be able to build on the foundation that has been established by Julian Burke."

MTA CEO Julian Burke said he was proud that Snoble would succeed him. "The MTA is a lot more stable than it was when I arrived four years ago, but now it's time to turn to a transportation expert to move Los Angeles forward. No one has a better reputation than Roger Snoble."

### Highly respected manager

Roger Yagura, president and general manager of San Diego Transit where Snoble worked for 20 years, echoed those sentiments. Yagura said Snoble was a highly respected manager who worked well with staff, elected

officials and the community and was able to bring consensus on key projects.

"MTA is the biggest agency of its kind in the country with a truly multimodal approach to moving people," Snoble said. "It represents a rare challenge in the American transit industry."

Snoble was given a four-year contract to manage the MTA.

As the head of DART, Snoble's current annual base salary is \$218,200 a year, however, the cost-of-living in Los Angeles is nearly 60 percent higher than in Dallas according to research firms that compare the cost-of-living in major U.S. cities.

In recognition of higher real estate, state income taxes, and other expenses in Los Angeles, the MTA Board agreed to pay Snoble an annual base salary of \$295,000 to become the MTA's chief executive officer.

Snoble earned a bachelor of science degree in geography and a master of arts degree in economic geography from the University of Akron, Ohio. He is married with two grown sons.

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** For more information about Dallas Area Rapid Transit, go to [www.dart.org](http://www.dart.org) on the World Wide Web.

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** (June 20, 2001) Laurie Garris and Brent Zerger, both Public Arts Officers in Metro Art, volunteered as judges for this year's MTA Bus Rodeo. In this article, they describe their experiences at the Rodeo preliminary competition.



Volunteer judges develop a true appreciation of the art of bus operation from a unique perspective.  
PHOTO BY BRENT ZERGER

## ...A Hoot and a Holler!

By LAURIE GARRIS and BRENT ZERGER

Being volunteer judges for the preliminary MTA Bus Rodeo competition was a hoot and a holler – a unique experience filled with swirling clouds of dust, crushed cones, and some daring near-misses.

As the drivers put their "horses" through the paces on the asphalt parking lot outside the Santa Anita Race Track, we judges expected to saddle up topside and swing our lassos while riding our thoroughbreds to victory.

See also:  
[Operators, Maintenance Teams to Compete in Saturday's Bus Rodeo](#)

Instead, we were each given an event where we were paired with another seasoned judge, and a yard stick with which to measure the drivers' ability to come within inches of grazing and scraping the curb in a simulated passenger pick-up.

The demanding obstacle course included a serpentine maneuver, backing into a narrow channel, speeding through barrels, and avoiding running over strategically placed tennis balls. Participating bus operators steeled their nerves while focusing their skills on this highly competitive event.

While we groaned over each downed cone, we also cheered many impressive feats of seasoned driving know-how.

We also had an opportunity to chew the fat with many other MTA cowpokes, and came away with a better understanding of the challenges our bus operators face every day on the job.

Don't be surprised if this year's national Bus Rodeo champ comes from the Los Angeles MTA!

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## **Subway Sees Greatest 1-Month Ridership Gain**

- **Gas Prices Cited**

By GARY WOSK

(June 26, 2001) The Metro Red Line has experienced its greatest one-month gain in numerical ridership since the system debuted in 1993. Only during the opening of new segments has ridership been higher.

In May 2001, approximately 10,000 more passengers boarded the subway each weekday – 134,675 – as compared to April 2001 when weekday boardings averaged 125,050.

In May 2000, one-month before the 17.4 mile Metro Red Line opened in the San Fernando Valley, ridership reached 65,150 weekday boardings. Following the opening of the 6.3-mile extension, ridership soared to 119,150 weekday boardings.

"Ridership has been building for the last two to three months," said Ashok Kumar, director, Technical Services and Transportation Analysis. "Although more analysis is required, including the origination of most of this new ridership, it appears the main reason for the increase is the continued high cost of gasoline.

### **Subway more economical**

"I would also speculate that the people in the Valley account for the highest share of the ridership increase since they find it much more economical to take the subway on long trips to downtown jobs."

Overall, ridership on the 59.4-mile Metro Rail system jumped from 216,400 weekday boardings in April 2001 to 228,750 weekday boardings in May 2001 – a 5.7 percent increase.

Ridership on the Metro Blue Line rose from 62,850 weekday daily boarding passengers in April 2001 to 63,725 in May 2001. On the Metro Green Line, daily weekday boardings in April 2001 grew from 28,500 to 30,350 in May 2001.

June ridership numbers are not expected to be released until mid-July.

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CLICK ON IMAGE FOR LARGER VIEW

PHOTOS BY JOE JONES



This 40-foot, low-floor Orion is one of 84 new coaches being operated for the MTA by First Transit.



Coach USA operates 36 new buses on MTA contract lines, including this 20-foot Thomas coach.



This 40-foot Blue Bird bus is one of six operated by MV Transportation under MTA contract.

## **MTA Contract Bus Lines to Have All-New Fleet by July 1**

(June 27, 2001) By July 1, the MTA's three major bus line contractors – First Transit, Coach USA and MV Transportation – will be providing passenger service with an all-new fleet of coaches.

The three contractors will operate a total of 126 new buses on the 15 lines they contract from the MTA, according to Joe Jones, manager, Transportation Contract Services.

Josee Larochelle, manager, Operations Budget and Performance Analysis notes that the three companies had been running some coaches that were more than 18 years old.

The MTA, which has been upgrading the Metro Bus fleet, recently awarded contracts that required First Transit, Coach USA and MV Transportation to operate new buses on the 15 contract lines.

These buses are part of the MTA's accelerated bus procurement program instituted in 1998. Since that time, the average age of the Metro Bus fleet has dropped from nearly 15 years to 6.1 years of age.

### **Positive impact on performance**

Some of the new buses already are in revenue service and have had a positive impact on contractor performance. Customer complaints related to service adherence are down.

"The reduction in customer complaints can be directly attributed to the new and more reliable equipment," says Larochelle. "That has resulted in improvements in on-time pullouts and reductions in lost revenue service. In addition, the new equipment has contributed positively to improvements in contractor cleanliness ratings."

First Transit, which runs a total of 84 buses for the MTA, will have 67 new Orion 40-foot, low-floor coaches. The company also will operate 17 30-foot El Dorado coaches.

Coach USA will operate 36 new buses – 20 40-foot Thomas coaches, 11 30-foot El Dorados and five 25-foot El Dorados – to service MTA contract lines.

MV Transportation will operate six new 40-foot buses built by Blue Bird.

"We recognized that there was a need for new vehicles on the contractor lines," says Larochelle. "We had to make this improvement in order to offer higher quality, more reliable service to the public."

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In one of her last official duties as MTA Board Chair, County Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke commends Mayor Richard Riordan for his leadership and service as a member of the Board. PHOTO BY BILL HEARD

**Board Action Update: June 28**

## **Board Upgrades 401(k) and 457 Savings Plans; Improves Retiree Medical Plan**

### **IN THIS REPORT**

Actions also were taken on the [transit police contract](#), [CNG fueling stations](#), a [pedestrian underpass](#) connecting the Universal City Metro Rail station and Universal Studios, a [joint development](#) at the Wilshire/Western station and improvements at the [El Monte Transit Station](#), a proposal to develop a portion of the [Taylor Yards](#) and a ["defeased lease"](#) of 67 light-rail cars.

(June 28, 2001) The MTA Board took affirmative action, today, to improve employee benefits by voting to upgrade the 401(k) and 457 savings plans. The Board made substantial improvements in

the retiree medical plan by increasing the agency's share of the cost and reducing the age and years of service required for eligibility.

The Board also voted to cancel Line 497 (LA-Pomona-Montclair) in favor of service to be offered on Foothill Transit Line 699 and the Metrolink San Bernardino Line.

Actions also were taken on the transit police contract, CNG fueling stations, a pedestrian underpass connecting the Universal City Metro Rail station and Universal Studios, a joint development at the Wilshire/Western station and improvements at the El Monte Transit Station, a proposal to develop a portion of the Taylor Yards and a "defeased lease" of 67 light-rail cars.

**Updates to 401(k) and 457 plans, Item 28. Approved by the Board.** The revised 401(k) and 457 plans permit employees to contribute up to \$11,000 annually in either the 401(k) Plan or the 457 Plan – or into both, for a total of \$22,000. The contributions limit will increase \$1,000 a year until it reaches \$15,000 for each plan, a total of \$30,000, in 2006.

See [metro.net June 14: New Law to Equalize 401\(k\) and 457 Plans: Double Contributions](#)

**Retiree Medical Plan, Item 33. Approved by the Board with an amendment requiring a staff report in August on other possible benefits and a history of this issue since the 1993 merger.** The motion would adopt the revised non-contract and Teamsters retiree medical plan that liberalizes the eligibility requirements and improves the pre-65 years of age benefit, effective July 1, 2001.

**FY 2001 Service Change, Item 12. Approved by the Board with a provision that Foothill Transit will address the issue of providing sufficient seating.** The staff has recommended canceling Line 497 (LA-Pomona-Montclair) because the service is duplicated by Foothill Transit Line 699 and Metrolink San Bernardino Line service. Line 497 has the second-highest subsidy rate and the second lowest productivity rate in the Metro Bus system, according to a staff report. It operates 35 one-way bus trips daily requiring 10 peak buses that carry about 750

passengers per day. The subsidy per passenger is \$3.47, compared with a system average subsidy of \$1.31.

**Transit Police Contracts. Item 52. Approved by the Board with an amendment requiring a staff report on the effect of the new contract on the MTA's anti-graffiti program.** The Board approved contracts totaling \$50.57 million with the LAPD and Sheriff's Department for transit policing services in FY 2002. The LAPD will provide 219 sworn officers and the Sheriff's Department 153. The contracts include funding for 54 civilian personnel in the two agencies.

The \$50.57 million expenditure is \$2.9 million more than approved by the Board in May, but the agency expects to make up the difference in agency-wide savings by mid-year.

"This level of expenditure," says a report to the Board, "will ensure that the MTA, along with our law enforcement partners, remain(s) in the forefront of transit security nationwide."

The report noted that crime on the public transit system is "extremely low" and that the system is "very safe for our riders and employees."

**Construction of CNG Fueling Facilities at Divisions 2, 9 and 15, Item 14. Approved by the Board.** The Committee will consider awarding a 10-year, \$42.857 million lease to The Hanover Company of Broken Arrow, Okla., to design, build and maintain CNG fueling stations at divisions 2 and 9 and a replacement station at Division 15, with options for facilities at divisions 6 and 12. The Committee will consider whether to authorize the CEO to execute a \$22.1 million lease agreement with G.E. Capital Public Finance, Inc., of Minneapolis, for the fueling stations.

The MTA currently can fuel up to 1,500 CNG buses. By the end of FY 2002, the agency will need to fuel a CNG fleet of more than 1,940 coaches. CNG fueling stations already are in place at divisions 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 15 and 18.

**Pedestrian Underpass at the Universal City Metro Rail Station, Item 26. Approved by the Board.** The Committee will be asked to authorize the CEO to execute a \$452,416 change order for the redesign of a pedestrian tunnel under Lankershim Boulevard that would connect the Universal City Metro Rail station and Universal Studios.

In a 1994 Memorandum of Understanding between the MTA and MCA, the agency agreed to construct the tunnel with two entrance portals on the Universal Studios property. In May 2001, the Board amended the MOU to delete one portal on Universal Studios' property, widen the tunnel, provide an additional escalator and stair and construct a right-turn lane on Universal Terrace Parkway. Universal Studios and LADOT agreed to these revisions.

**Joint Development at Wilshire/Western. Item 5. Approved by the Board.** The Board authorized the CEO to enter into a six-month exclusive negotiations agreement with Wilshire Entertainment Center for development of about 2.34 acres at the Wilshire/Western station.

The company is proposing a 50,800-square foot mixed-use development with retail space and restaurants, 182 rental units occupying 248,000 square feet, 10,000 square feet for mechanical and administrative use, and 156,200 square feet of parking. The area would accommodate 12

41-foot buses and one 60-foot bus.

**El Monte Transit Station Improvement Program, Item 41.**

**Approved by the Board.** The Committee will consider awarding Foothill Transit \$369,757 under the 1995 Call for Projects for improvements at the El Monte Transit Station.

The improvements would include new signage, concrete paving treatments and a new information pylon at the main tunnel entrance. Foothill would remodel the vacant transit store to sell fare media and provide schedule information to customers. Other improvements would include enhanced security, new bus benches, walkways and signage, bulletin boards, landscaping, lighting and art.

The El Monte station is the major transit hub in the San Gabriel Valley, serving 6,826 Foothill and 2,777 Metro Bus passengers daily.

**Development of Taylor Yards, Parcel C. Item 9. Approved by the**

**Board.** The Board directed the MTA staff to work with the City of Los Angeles during the next 60 days on issues concerning appropriate uses for a portion of the Taylor Yards called Parcel C. The staff was directed to begin an appraisal of the site and to report back in 60 days with a list of options for use of the land.

The MTA owns the 24-acre Taylor Yards, which lies along the Los Angeles River between the Pasadena Freeway and the Glendale Freeway. The MTA purchased the property in the late 1980s for use as a maintenance yard for the Pasadena Blue Line, but another site has been chosen.

The City of Los Angeles and the California Department of Parks and Recreation are working together to secure funding to purchase Parcel C from the MTA for recreational use.

**Defeased Lease Transaction, Item 30. Approved by the Board.** The motion would authorize the CEO to negotiate a "defeased lease" with Fleet Capital Leasing for the 15 Sumitomo light-rail cars and 52 Siemens light-rail cars. The contract is expected to generate a gross benefit of between \$15.5 million and \$26 million to the MTA.

Earlier this year, the Board approved a defeased lease deal that could earn up to \$14 million for the agency. Included in the deal are the Regional Rebuild Center, rail divisions 20 and 22, the Rail Operations Center, and bus divisions 3 and 18.

**Non-Contract Pension, Item 46. The Executive Management Committee has continued this item for 30 days. The Committee requested more information in order to study the issue further.** The motion would adopt the revised non-contract pension benefit formula of 2 percent at age 55 for service after July 1, 2001.

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## Board Oks Wilshire BRT, Exposition LRT for Mid-City/Westside

IN THIS REPORT:

[Wilshire Boulevard BRT](#)

[Exposition LRT](#)

By ED SCANNELL

(June 29, 2001) - The MTA Board of Directors today adopted a bus rapid transit project and a light rail project as the combined Locally Preferred Alternative for LA's Mid-City and Westside, two areas of the city that are expected to experience substantial growth over the next two decades.



The Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) designation is the federal government's term for the transit improvement preferred over others. It is required before federal funding can be made available for construction.

Click on image to view map of planned routes

The Board adopted Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) as the alternative for the Wilshire Boulevard Corridor and Light-Rail Transit (LRT) as the alternative for the Exposition Corridor.

### Wilshire Boulevard Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

The Wilshire Boulevard BRT will run 13.2 miles along Wilshire Boulevard from the Metro Red Line Wilshire/Western station to downtown Santa Monica. It would be implemented in a phased plan with the following provisions:



Artist's rendering of Bus Rapid Transit station on Wilshire Boulevard.

Peak-hour service would operate in dedicated transit lanes in the initial phase, following the successful demonstration of service in mixed-flow traffic and with the concurrence of the affected city and county jurisdictions.

The MTA would implement 24-hour dedicated transit lanes at a future date only with the approval of the affected cities and in coordination with communities.

BRT buses would build on the success of the Metro Rapid Bus program, whose distinctive red and white buses have been operating on the Wilshire/Whittier and Ventura Boulevard corridors since June 2000.

The initial phase of the Wilshire Boulevard BRT would cost \$212 million. It would replace the current 40-foot Metro Rapid buses with 45-foot or 60-foot buses. It would have enhanced bus stations, improved signal priority, fare vending machines at stations and a peak-period curb lane, subject to approval by each municipal jurisdiction.

Construction is expected to begin in 2003, with operation in 2005.

The ultimate Wilshire BRT alternative calls for the reconstruction of median-adjacent or 24-hour lanes, if approved by each municipal jurisdiction, and the possible introduction of 75-foot double-articulated buses.

In just seven months of service, Metro Rapid has cut the travel time of commuters by as much as 25 percent and increased bus ridership by 32.6 percent on the Wilshire/Whittier corridor and by 26.4 percent on the Ventura Boulevard corridor.

An average trip on local bus service operating on Wilshire Boulevard takes up to 70 minutes. Average travel time on the Wilshire BRT over the same distance would be 46 minutes.

Thursday's Board action regarding the Wilshire BRT project included one amendment to the staff proposal. The Board directed that additional sites be considered for a new downtown bus maintenance and storage facility.

### **Exposition Light-Rail Transit (LRT)**

The 9.1-mile Exposition Light-Rail Transit (LRT) project would operate on the MTA-owned Exposition right-of-way from downtown Los Angeles to Venice/Robertson in Culver City. The system would include 10 stations. The cost of the project is estimated at \$309 million.



Artist's rendering of Light Rail Transit along Exposition corridor.

Unless new funding is found, construction of the Exposition LRT is slated to begin in 2008, with operation in 2014.

The line would start at 7th and Metro and proceed south along the existing Metro Blue Line tracks to Washington Boulevard. At Washington Boulevard the line would branch off, proceeding south on Hill Street to join the Exposition right-of-way near USC/Exposition Park.

The line then would proceed west on the Exposition right-of-way to its terminus at Venice/Washington. Feeder bus service would operate in mixed traffic west of the station.

The MTA Board adopted the Exposition Light Rail Transit project subject to the following conditions:

- A minimum operable segment would be identified from downtown Los Angeles to Exposition Park with priority given to implementing this first segment.
- The Exposition project will not take the place of the Wilshire, Eastside or San Fernando Valley transit corridor projects as a funding priority.
- The Exposition project will be separated from Wilshire Boulevard BRT as a stand-alone project for purposes of final environmental clearance.

The need for supplemental mitigation, including a possible tunnel segment at USC/Exposition Park, will be assessed following an expanded community outreach program and considered for inclusion in the preliminary engineering/final environmental impact statement/report at the time the Board approves the preliminary engineering contract.

In addition to the conditions listed above, Thursday's Board action included three amendments to the staff proposal regarding the Exposition corridor.

The first amendment calls on the MTA to “establish the vision and intent to construct light rail to Santa Monica and actively work to accelerate the flow of federal, state and local funds to complete this project as soon as possible without compromising other funding sources for MTA adopted projects.”

The Board also directed that further study be conducted to evaluate grade separation along the Exposition line and that the MTA move forward with a planned bikeway at the earliest possible date.

The Exposition right-of-way was purchased by the MTA in 1990 and currently is not in use. As a result, the LRT alternative would not displace any traffic lanes.

### **No bus line parallels Exposition**

No bus line operates continuous service parallel to the Exposition right-of-way, however, Santa Monica Big Blue Bus Line #10 currently takes between 60 and 75 minutes to complete the trip from downtown Santa Monica to downtown Los Angeles via the Santa Monica Freeway.

The estimated run time for the Exposition light rail option from downtown Los Angeles to Venice/Robertson is 28 minutes. Frequent, connecting bus service would be provided on Venice Boulevard and other streets to connect to other Westside destinations.

A short tunnel segment is being considered for the Exposition LRT options on the eastern part of the alignment near USC/Exposition Park from Figueroa Street to Vermont Avenue. The net additional cost for this 0.6-mile subway is estimated to be \$120 million.

The Westside of Los Angeles has the highest population and employment density in the Southern California region, as well as the highest proportion of transit ridership, features that make the area ideal for fixed guideway transit solutions.

### **Population expected to grow**

The area currently has a population of 1.5 million persons and that figure is expected to grow by 300,000 over the next 20 years. The number of jobs is projected to increase by over 200,000.

In addition, no significant expansion of existing freeway and street networks is planned to accommodate this growth. As a result, improvements in public transit represent the best means to meet future growth demands.

In January 1998, the MTA suspended work on the Metro Red Line subway extension to the Mid-City area due to lack of funding. The federal government had committed to fund \$245 million, or approximately 50 percent, of the cost of the project.

Adoption of an above-ground transit project could use these suspended subway funds. In addition, the Governor's Transportation Initiative has committed \$258 million in state funds for the Mid-City/Westside Transit Corridor.

Today's MTA Board action follows the April 2001 release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIS/EIR) for the Mid-City/Westside Transit Corridor Studies, which were initiated to examine potential alternatives to the subway extension and to preserve the federal funding.



An EIS/EIR is required to obtain state and federal funding to design and construct a project.

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