

MTA Wants to Know...



Will Commuters Use Electric Scooters or Bikes?

(Jan. 15, 2002) Electric scooters and bicycles? The MTA and SCRRRA want to find out whether commuters will use such energy-efficient, non-polluting devices – instead of their cars – to get to their nearest rail station.

At a meeting next week of the California Transportation Commission (CTC), the partner agencies will ask for \$368,000 to fund a three-year project. If approved at the CTC meeting, the program could start this spring.

> MTA Board Member and County Supervisor **Yvonne Brathwaite Burke** gets a charge out a scooter at the MTA's first Technology and Innovation Forum in December 2000.

The idea originated with a group of planners in the MTA's Countywide Planning department and SCRRRA, says program coordinator Walt Davis.

"We'd like to be in the forefront of new and innovative forms of transportation," says Davis, who heads the MTA's Transportation Demand Management team, a group of planners who look for ways to reduce traffic congestion.

"Commuting by bike or scooter and train would help reduce congestion and eliminate some air emissions," he adds. "It's also cheaper to build bike racks and lockers than parking lots."

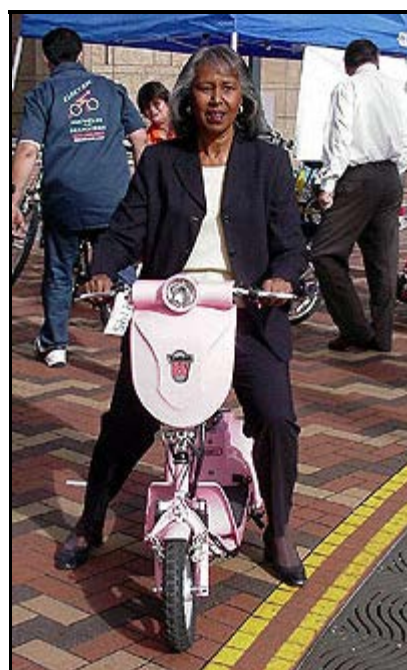
Provide scooters or bikes

The first phase of the study, tagged at \$180,000, would provide electric scooters or electric bikes for as little as \$10 a month to a small number of commuters at selected Metrolink stations. The criteria for the test stations would include good, safe bike paths leading to park 'n ride lots.

"We want to start out small to find out if there are any problems," says Davis. "We hope to learn whether any infrastructure changes will have to be made in order to make the electric bikes and scooters a viable transportation alternative. Lessons learned could include whether the users run out of power too often or have frequent flat tires."

Contrary to press reports, the scooters would not be the much-publicized and lawn-mower style "Ginger" scooters, according to Davis, but would be light-weight, fold-up scooters or electric bikes with small rechargeable electric motors. Both the scooters and the bikes could be carried aboard Metrolink trains.

The commuters involved in the test phase would be asked to keep a log of their experiences and would be surveyed occasionally to determine the



feasibility of the concept. If successful, the remaining funds could be used to buy between 200 and 500 electric scooters and bicycles in the final phases of the program.

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