

## WORKSHOP

## Transit Officials Hope to Encourage Bus Rapid Transit Nationwide

(April 9, 2002) A two-day workshop drew some 100 transit officials, manufacturers' representatives and others to MTA Headquarters, Tuesday and Wednesday, for discussions on the nationwide development of Bus Rapid Transit systems.



**A** FTA Chief Counsel William P. Sears said Bus Rapid Transit systems are important to transit's future.

Titled "Action Plan for a Thriving BRT Market," the workshop reflected growing national interest in transit systems that combine many of the attributes of bus and light-rail transportation. Topics included involving bus manufacturers, speeding up BRT development and communicating with the transit industry.

The MTA co-sponsored the workshop along with the Federal Transit Administration, Calstart and LADOT. The FTA hopes to encourage the introduction of BRT systems throughout the country.

Keynote speaker William P. Sears, chief counsel for the Federal Transit Administration, acknowledged that his agency considers Bus Rapid Transit to be a key element in transit's future.

CEO Roger Snoble, welcoming workshop participants, described the MTA's wide-ranging efforts to relieve traffic congestion – including providing rail service, HOV lanes, Metro Rapid Bus service and the Bus Rapid Transit project planned for the San Fernando Valley's Burbank-Chandler corridor.

Noting that freeway speeds have slowed dramatically in the past 10 years, Snoble said, "In the long run, we have to find better ways to move people."

Rex Gephart, project manager for the MTA's Metro Rapid Bus program, described the 26-mile Wilshire/Whittier route and the 16-mile Ventura Boulevard route. The MTA recently identified 23 new Metro Rapid corridors throughout the county based on transit dependency, population and employment density.

**V** Project manager Rex Gephart noted that the MTA's successful Metro Rapid Bus project has attracted new transit riders.



Six of the 23 corridors are currently in the planning stage. When they are opened, Los Angeles will have four east-west and four north-south Metro Rapid Bus lines.

The MTA's goal for the first two Metro Rapid Bus lines was a 25 percent improvement in travel times over regular bus service. Travel times have improved by 29 percent on the Wilshire/Whittier line and 23 percent on the Ventura line.

From end to end, the operators "manage the line," Gephart said. "The key to this service is having the bus operators work with one another."

Ridership is up 42 percent on the Wilshire/Whittier line and 38 percent on the Ventura line, he said. One-third of the increase reflects riders who

are new to public transit.

[Back to MTA Report](#)