

Policy Change Would Permit Vendors at Some Subway Stations

(April 18, 2002) Flowers, magazines, shoe shines and candy – all this and more could be on sale within a year at some Metro Red Line stations if the Board approves a proposed policy allowing commercial activities on MTA property.

The Executive Management and Audit Committee gave its stamp of approval to the policy, Thursday, and sent it to the full Board for consideration at its April 25 meeting.

A study by an auditing firm recommends rail station concession stands as a means of generating additional revenues for the MTA. The study also indicates that rail station concessions would make transit “more convenient and attractive” to patrons.

The only commercial activity currently allowed at Metro Rail stations is a pilot program begun in 1995 that permits seven plaza-level vendors at Wilshire/Western and Wilshire/Vermont. Board policy, as well as fire, life and safety regulations, had prohibited concessions on the station mezzanine levels.

Concession stands now feasible

In recent years, however, Metro Red Line Segment 1 stations have been retrofitted with fire sprinklers. Segment 2 and 3 stations were constructed with built-in sprinklers. With the fire hazard reduced, permitting concession stands within the stations became more feasible.

If the policy is approved by the full Board, the MTA could permit vendors on the plaza level at various Metro Red Line stations, including North Hollywood and Universal City, within the next 60 days, according to Real Estate Manager Velma Marshall.

Licensing mezzanine-level concessions could be accomplished within a year, but details of which stations would have them, the number of vendors and the kinds of goods permitted have not yet been finalized.


An interdepartmental team consisting of Real Estate Department, MTA Rail Operations and Countywide Planning, Security and Engineering is developing the detailed implementation plan for the vending program.

Vendors on the plazas

The initial plan is to allow limited cart vendors at the plaza levels on a first-come, first-served basis. A Request for Proposals will be issued to select a master tenant to operate concessions on the mezzanine levels of the rail stations.

Under the proposed policy, concessionaires could sell jewelry, sundries, newspapers, magazines, candy, photos, flowers, food in closed containers, among other items. Services could include shoe shines, self-



 This hot dog stand at the Wilshire/Western station is part of a successful pilot program to permit vendors at some Metro Rail stations.

service postal machines, ATMs, dry cleaners and film developer drop-off and pick-up services.

Vendors would not be permitted to sell or use alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, chewing gum or nuts in a shell. Hot food items also would be prohibited, along with any other activities deemed by the MTA to be unsafe or incompatible with transit operations.

By permitting concession stands and vendors, the proposed policy states, the MTA would expect to generate revenue, increase transit ridership, provide services to patrons and provide development and business opportunities to the private sector.

[Back to MTA Report](#)