

## Mayor of Seoul heads Korean delegation on tour of MTA



- Westside/Central General Manager Tracy Daly gives Seoul Mayor Lee Myung-bak and visiting transportation officials a whirlwind tour of transit operations, Metro Rapid, Hollywood and the Metro Red Line.

By GAYLE ANDERSON

MTA rolled out the red carpet, Jan. 18, for the Mayor of Seoul, South Korea, and a delegation of transportation officials from that city here on a fact-finding mission and inspection tour of restoration projects and innovative transportation systems.

Key to the mission was to review MTA's transit operations and discover elements that could be applied to a major transportation reorganization underway in Seoul.

MTA was the first stop in a nine-day tour that took the delegation to Boston; Providence, R.I.; Sao Paulo, Brazil, and finally, Curitiba, Brazil, the progressive city that pioneered the BRT concept.

The delegation, led by Mayor Lee Myung-bak, took particular interest in Metro Rapid, the precedent-setting program eyed by the mayor to improve the quality of service in South Korea's capital city.

Metro Westside/Central General Manager Tracy Daly took the delegation on a whirlwind tour of MTA's greatest hits, showcasing Metro Rapid, the joint development site of Hollywood & Highland and the Metro Red Line.

The tour began with a ride to MTA Headquarters on the LADOT's downtown DASH and a briefing on that service from LADOT planning supervisor Phil Aker. At MTA Headquarters, Daly presented an overview of public transportation in Los Angeles and



From Seoul to L.A. - Scenes from Mayor Lee Myung-bak's whirlwind tour of MTA with General Manager Tracy Daly, Jody Feerst Litvak, Jinny Park, Dan Cowden and LADOT's Phil Aker.



Briefing at Headquarters



Inside BOCC



Ready to Roll

provided a demonstration of the Bus Operations Control Center.

Daly noted the South Koreans' keen interest in eco-friendly solutions.

"I am happy to report that the MTA operates the largest CNG fleet in the United States. Nearly 80 percent of our bus fleet – 1,862 out of some 2,800 buses -- are CNGs." The Seoul delegation, impressed with the CNG fleet, reported that 20% of their fleet is CNG powered.

The meeting also revealed that the population of Seoul, roughly equal to that of Los Angeles County at about 10 million, inhabits an area of approximately 236 square miles, about one-sixth the size of the 4,081-square-mile L.A. region served by the MTA. You don't have to do the math to imagine rush hour in Seoul without public transportation.

A BRT system similar to Metro Rapid, which aims to beat the traffic clock, is high on the mayor's agenda for transportation reorganization in Seoul.

"Metro Rapid doesn't have to go faster to get there faster," Daly told the delegation. "With its arterial routes and traffic signal control, Metro Rapid can decrease travel time by nearly 25 percent."

Next came a trip to every tourist's favorite destination, Hollywood. But the best part was getting there aboard a Metro Rapid bus, from which the mayor and company could take in city sights along the way to Hollywood via Koreatown.

With only 30 minutes to spare in the four-hour schedule, Mayor Lee managed a quick look at the home of the Oscars and tried out the footprints at Grauman's Chinese Theater, where he proved to be a perfect fit for actor Morgan Freeman.

The Hollywood/Highland Station provided a grand entrance to the Metro Red Line. "Your subway is very beautiful," said Mayor Lee, through an interpreter. "I can see how the art makes the travel much nicer for the passengers."

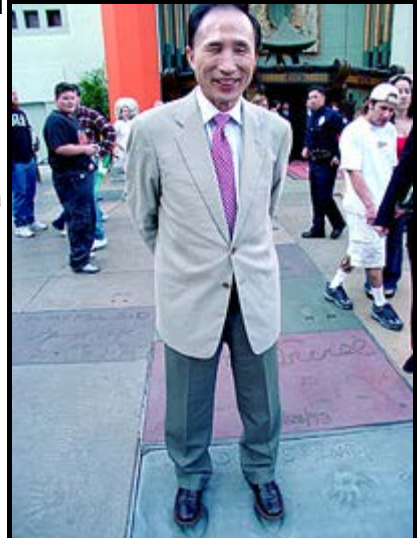
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It's the home of the Oscars



Hollywood Scene



Morgan Freeman fits



Riding the Red Line

PHOTOS BY GAYLE ANDERSON