



Metro Rapid Lines Start Sunday on Van Nuys, Florence



PHOTO BY JOSE UBALDO



South Bay General Manager Dana Coffey spoke during a news event announcing the start, this Sunday, of Metro Rapid service on Florence Avenue and Van Nuys Boulevard.

By ED SCANNELL

(June 26, 2003) MTA's successful Metro Rapid bus program will reach another milestone Sunday, June 29, with the start of service on Van Nuys Boulevard and Florence Avenue.

"Metro Rapid continues to deliver on the promise its name boldly asserts," said Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke. "The new lines on Van Nuys Boulevard and Florence Avenue will bring the same fast and reliable service that passengers on Wilshire Boulevard, Ventura Boulevard, Vermont Avenue and South Broadway now enjoy."

The 21.4-mile Metro Rapid Line 761 will operate on Van Nuys Boulevard between Foothill and Ventura boulevards, then continue through the Sepulveda Pass to Westwood and connect to the Wilshire/Whittier Metro Rapid at Wilshire Boulevard.

The 10.3-mile Metro Rapid Line 711 will operate on Florence Avenue from Garfield Avenue in the City of Bell Gardens to La Brea Avenue in Inglewood.

MTA and LADOT anticipate that Metro Rapid service on Florence Avenue will result in a 20-25 percent improvement in travel time. A similar improvement is expected on Van Nuys Boulevard when the bus signal priority system becomes operational in September.

40 percent increase

Since June 2000, total bus ridership in the first two Metro Rapid corridors -- Wilshire/Whittier and Ventura Boulevard -- has increased by nearly 40 percent, with one third of the increase coming from passengers new to public transit.

Wilshire/Whittier Metro Rapid Line 720 currently has average weekday boardings of 45,000. Ventura Metro Rapid Line 750 averages weekday boardings of 9,000.

"Metro Rapid has consistently proven its value to our passengers as a

quick, reliable and safe means of travel to jobs, medical facilities and places of recreation," said CEO Roger Snoble. "We think Metro Rapid makes sense and clearly our customers agree."

The new lines, including one on Crenshaw Boulevard that will begin operations in December 2003, are part of an expansion of the Metro Rapid system. By 2008, a total of 27 Metro Rapid lines will crisscross Greater Los Angeles.

"The Rapid bus is better than the car which has become so expensive to drive with the cost of gasoline" says Maria Gaeta, an area resident. "Besides, the city has too much traffic. On the Rapid I won't have to drive."

The remaining corridors include Soto Street, Crenshaw-Rossmore, Pico Boulevard, Santa Monica Boulevard, Hawthorne Boulevard, Long Beach Boulevard, Hollywood-Fairfax-Pasadena, Western Avenue, Beverly Boulevard and Vernon-La Cienega.

Also, Atlantic Boulevard, Central Avenue, San Fernando-Lankershim, West Olympic Boulevard, Garvey-Chavez, Manchester Avenue, San Fernando Road (south), Sepulveda Boulevard (south), Torrance-Long Beach and Lincoln Boulevard.

The Metro Rapid bus program was recently selected as a semifinalist in Harvard University's 2002 Innovation in American Government Awards.

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