

## Metro Report Archives - September 2004 Articles

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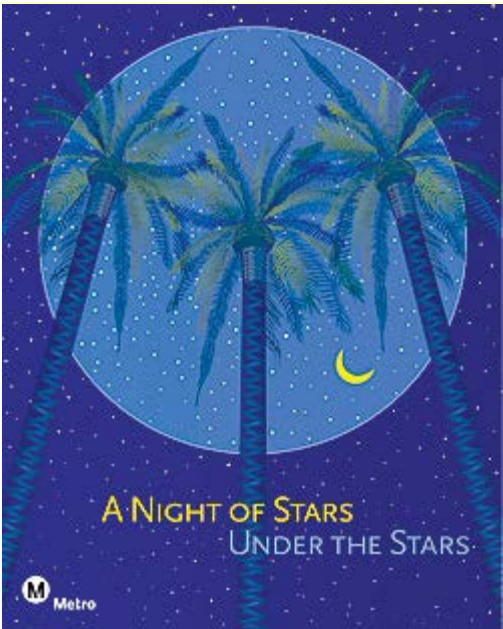
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Yuriy Kaganovskiy  
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Gilbert Beltran  
Florence Bingham  
Carmen Boctor  
Gary Breaux  
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Jose Gomez

Gateway Cities

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To Chau  
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Humberto Garcia  
Lawrence Garcia  
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Abdul Janmohamed  
Calvin Lam  
Kenneth Lee  
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## Meet Rick Thorpe Metro Construction Chief

Title: Chief Capital Management Officer and Executive Officer, Metro Construction

Joined Metro: November 2003

Prior to joining Metro, Thorpe served as CEO of the Pasadena Blue Line Construction Authority beginning in October 1999. He completed that project, which opened in July 2003, on time and under budget.

From 1995 to October 1999, he was the program manager for the organization that built the first segment of Salt Lake City's 19.6-mile TRAX light-rail system. Earlier, he was responsible for constructing six segments of the San Diego Trolley network during the 17 years he was employed there.

A native of Storm Lake, Iowa, Thorpe moved with his parents to San Diego in 1951 when he was two years old.

Thorpe earned bachelor's and master's degrees in engineering from San Diego State University. He is a Registered Engineer in both California and Utah.

Thorpe and his wife, Michelle, live in Park City, Utah. They have two children, Heather, 19, a junior at New York University; and Robbie, 15, a freshman at Park City High School.

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Chief Rick  
Thorpe Looks At  
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## Board Action Update: Construction Projects Advance

(Sept. 1, 2004) Planned construction projects at three operating divisions took a significant step ahead in August with action by the Board of Directors.

### Division 9 offices

The biggest of the three projects will be a three-story, 41,891-square foot building to house the Division 9 transportation staff, the San Gabriel Valley Service Sector office and a substation for Sheriff's deputies.

Under the supervision of Metro's Facilities Operations Department, construction of the transportation building is scheduled to begin in December and completed in March 2006.

The new building is the first phase of a master plan that calls for construction of a new Division 9 maintenance building, improvements to the El Monte Transit Center and expansion of parking to accommodate about 300 CNG buses.

### Division 4 project

The Board also advanced plans to expand Non-Revenue Division 4 by constructing a new repair building with two vehicle maintenance bays, office and storage space, and a new automatic car washer capable of handling an average of 40 cars a day.

An adjacent vacant parcel north of the division will be cleared, paved and striped to expand non-revenue vehicle parking from 258 to 500 spaces. The project, also under the supervision of the Facilities Operations Department, is scheduled to begin in October and completed in May 2005.

### Metro Green Line project

The Board approved a budget of \$3.4 million to construct a vehicle cleaning – or "blow-down" – facility at Metro Green Line Division 22 in Lawndale.

The 3,500 square foot building will accommodate one light-rail car. With construction of the "blow-down" facility, Metro Green Line cars can be cleaned at their own division, rather than transferring them to Metro Blue Line Division 11.




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## Metro Will Ask City to Make Wilshire Bus-Only Lanes Permanent

By ED SCANNELL

(Sept. 1, 2004) Metro will ask the City of Los Angeles to make a one-mile dedicated buses-only lane on Wilshire Boulevard in West Los Angeles a permanent improvement.

A staff recommendation approved last week by the Board of Directors also calls for the evaluation of additional segments of Wilshire Boulevard and other Metro Rapid bus corridors that have potential for dedicated peak period transit lanes.

"This demonstration project has clearly shown the value of giving buses their own lane," said Board Chairman Frank Roberts. "Dedicated transit lanes will greatly benefit our customers, ensuring them safer, faster, more efficient and more reliable service. I am confident this improved service would attract new customers to the Metro Bus System."

Metro opened the peak-period buses-only lane in both directions of Wilshire Boulevard between Federal and Centinela Avenues on March 8, 2004. The demonstration project was implemented in cooperation with the City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) and Santa Monica Big Blue Bus.

### Time savings

An evaluation by Metro staff determined that the exclusive lane produced average travel timesavings for Metro and Big Blue buses of up to six percent in the a.m. peak hours and up to 14 percent in the p.m. peak hours.

In addition, bus patrons experienced greater service consistency. Prior to implementation of the project, buses traversed the one-mile segment during peak hours in as little as four minutes or in as many as 12 minutes.

Since implementation of the project, the consistency of run times during the most congested periods has improved by up to 27 percent.

Local service buses make more stops compared to Metro Rapid buses. As a result, local buses are experiencing even greater benefit from the transit lane, due to less merging into and out of traffic lanes at bus stops.

### Delay eliminated

One of the biggest delays and potential causes of accidents for buses occurs as buses wait to reenter traffic after making a passenger stop. In most cases the exclusive lane eliminated this delay, as well as the potential traffic safety hazard of buses re-entering the flow of traffic.

No impacts to automobile traffic were observed. In fact, automobiles

may benefit from not having to wait behind buses pulling away from stops or while other automobiles parallel park or pull out of parking spaces.

"Safety is Metro's first priority and the buses-only lane certainly improves the safety of our patrons and employees, as well as drivers of other vehicles on Wilshire Boulevard," said Deputy CEO John Catoe. "The buses-only lane is an excellent example of how safety and efficiency can go hand in hand."

The Los Angeles City Council now must decide either to cancel the demonstration project or extend the operation as a permanent improvement. LADOT has requested that Metro make a recommendation to the City of Los Angeles prior to consideration by the City Council.

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## Gateway Cities Governance Council Considers Service Changes

By RICK JAGER

(Sept. 1, 2004) The Gateway Cities Governance Council is evaluating a number of proposed bus service improvements in Southeast Los Angeles County, which would become effective in late December.

The Governance Council conducted a public hearing on the service modifications in August. The Council will vote on the proposed changes during its next meeting at 2 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 9, at The Gas Company in Downey.

"The service changes are proposed to improve public access to education, transportation centers, hospitals and employment centers, and to eliminate unnecessary service duplication," said General Manager Alex Clifford.

### The proposed changes include:

- Modifications to Line 270 (Monrovia/El Monte/Norwalk) will provide new service to Whittier College, to the Norwalk/Santa Fe Springs Metrolink Station, and to LA County offices in Norwalk.
- A new routing proposed for Line 362 (Hawaiian Gardens/Cerritos/Telegraph Rd/Los Angeles Limited) will improve access to County offices and provide new service to the Metrolink Station and the Metropolitan State Hospital in Norwalk.
- New service is also being considered for the cities of Downey, Lakewood, Paramount and Pico Rivera. Line 265 (Pico Rivera/Whittier) is proposed to operate new weekend service and extended service hours on weekdays.
- One minor route change is also being considered on Line 275 (Greenleaf Ave./Valley View/Cerritos) in the City of Whittier. Line 576 (South Los Angeles/Pacific Palisades Express), is proposed to be discontinued due to excessive service duplication.

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David Vila and his trusty bicycle trained several times a week in preparation for the Leukemia Society ride.

## David Vila's 106-Mile Ride Nets \$2,500 for Leukemia

By ELIZABETH A. CRAIGG

(Sept. 2, 2004) Biking 106 miles at an average 16 mph to finish in 6 hours and 26 minutes – all to raise money to find a cure for leukemia. And Metro's David Vila says, "I'm hooked on it and I love it!"

Vila, a contract administration manager, participated in the Cool Breeze Century Ride for the Leukemia Society of America, Aug. 21. It was his first bike event.

In preparation for the ride, he cycled more than 1,500 miles in three months. His training and efforts paid off for the Leukemia Society. He raised \$2,500, far exceeding his goal of \$1,800.

Why at age 56 did he begin cycling? "Last year I became eligible for a senior citizen discount and I realized that I wanted to see how good of an athlete I can be after fifty," says Vila, a contract administration manager.

### 'An enjoyable thing'

He trained with Team In Training two to three times a week. He also trained with a triathlon team one to two times a week, averaging 30-85 miles each trip. "A 50 mile ride is an enjoyable thing."

The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's Team In Training hosts and trains participants in marathons, half marathons, century and triathlons in various locations to raise money for finding a cure for leukemia and lymphoma.

Vila is excited about being involved with other races that support other good causes. "There are a lot more causes that mean more to you when you get older."

As a personal challenge, he wants to finish another century bike ride – this time in 5 hours at 20 mph.

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## Metro School Pool Program Helps Parents Set Up Carpools

By RICK JAGER

(Sept. 2, 2004) With schools returning to session throughout the greater Los Angeles area, Metro is offering a free carpool matching service to make the school day ritual of commuting easier and more convenient.

Metro School Pool offers free, voluntary and confidential matching service to parents interested in organizing school carpools. The program is open to students in all participating public and private elementary, middle and high schools in Los Angeles County.

Participation is voluntary and parents share the task of driving students to and from school.

For information on the program or to sign up, parents must contact their local schools and complete a Metro School Pool survey.

### Addresses are confidential

Parents then will receive a list of others from their school who are interested in carpooling. Home addresses are confidential and are not shared. Only phone numbers are provided.

Parents phone one another and determine if they want to start a carpool. They have the opportunity to discuss their student's schedules, arrange pick-up and drop-off points and decide how to share carpool costs and driving responsibilities.

Metro School Pool does not transport children to school.

For more information on the Metro School Pool program, parents can call Metro Commute Services at 922-2811 (select option 1).


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## National Rail~Volution Conference Comes to L.A., Sept. 18-22

By DAVE SOTERO

(Sept. 2, 2004) A national audience of transportation professionals, urban planners, community activists and others comes to Los Angeles, Sept. 18-22, for the 10th annual national Rail~Volution Conference.

Hosted this year by Metro, Rail~Volution is the nation's premier industry gathering for public and private sector groups committed to working together to create more livable communities through transit investments.

The conference will also serve as a forum for local officials, business and environmental leaders, developers and architects interested in making cooperative land use and transportation decisions.

"Los Angeles has long been one of the primary trendsetters in American culture," says Congressman Earl Blumenauer of Oregon, founder of Rail~Volution. "As it faces changes in population and demographics, increasing sprawl and traffic congestion, a lack of affordable housing and economic uncertainties, it is becoming one of the most important laboratories for livability in this decade. Los Angeles is where America is headed."

## 60-plus workshops planned

More than 60 workshops are planned covering a wide range of topics, including smart growth, urbanism, economic development, schools, community building, advocacy, health and environmental protection. Conference planners have also organized 20 mobile workshops that will allow attendees to tour new transit-oriented developments and other urban centers in downtown and East Los Angeles, Santa Monica, Hollywood, Pasadena, Fullerton, Brea, Claremont and Long Beach.

For more information, visit the Rail~Volution web site at [www.railvolution.com](http://www.railvolution.com).




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## Operators' Comments Help South Bay Schedule Makers Keep Buses on Time

By RICH MORALLO

(Sept. 3, 2004) Schedule Maker Steve Tontz flipped the pages of his South Bay bus lines. An operator had just told him that the published Line 212 bus stop arrival time at Slauson Avenue and La Brea Avenue might be different from the list used by operators to stay on schedule.

"I may be precisely on time at that bus stop but if the public has a different schedule they may think I'm late," the operator said.

Tontz, a 23-year Metro employee, nodded as he looked for the specific document among his schedules. As part of the South Bay Sector scheduling team responsible for the production and maintenance of 42 bus line schedules covering hundreds of miles and even more bus stops throughout Los Angeles County, he would later research the documents involved.

"We'll definitely look further into this, and thanks for the feedback and information," he remarked to the operator.

And information and feedback were exactly what Tontz and fellow-scheduler Virginia Ward were seeking that early August morning in the training room of Arthur Winston Division 5.

## Comments from operators

They were getting comments from operators after the semi-annual "shakeup" in June when many agency-wide bus service changes were made in Los Angeles. Twice a year, in June and December, Metro adjusts its bus service to respond to ridership demand and allow an opportunity for the operators to bid for new bus line assignments.

"This post-shakeup visit to the division provides the staff a chance to talk directly to the bus operators about our bus schedules," said Schedule Supervisor Thang 'Tom' Tran. "We ask them what is working well or what can be improved schedulewise."



Steve Tontz, left, goes over bus line information with Metro Bus Operator Leonardo Solis at Arthur Winston Division 5. Below, Schedule Maker Virginia Ward in a scheduling feedback session with Operator Christian Vasquez.





That morning Tontz and Ward talked to several other operators.

"One operator mentioned that he had experienced heavy ridership on Line 206 southbound from Hollywood Boulevard and Vermont Avenue," said Tontz, who has eight years experience in scheduling.

Passenger crowding on a line could lead to schedule delays as the bus waits for additional riders to board and exit. " We would take a closer look at that corridor; this could lead to adding another bus trip to that line," he said.

#### **'More recovery time'**

"One common request from transportation staff is for more recovery time," added Tontz, explaining how some operators have difficulty arriving at a layover in time to depart on schedule for the return trip.

Increasing the time for a bus to remain at a layover location would help make up the minutes that may have been lost earlier by traffic congestion, accidents and detours. The additional time would also enable an operator to start his return trip without any delay, staying on schedule with the printed bus line timetable in the public's hands.

Back at sector headquarters after the feedback sessions, schedule work continues for Tontz, Ward, Thang, fellow schedule makers Hung Le and Will Hooper, and Transportation Planning Manager Scott Greene. They will discuss and evaluate various scheduling factors such as passengers loads and run-time analysis, and evaluate operator suggestions .

"Comments from operators, when intended to be constructive and supportive of improving operations, are very welcome to us," said Tontz, as he and the schedule team doggedly perfect their timetables.

"This will help operators efficiently navigate city streets," he said, "so the agency can offer reliable, safe and on-time bus service to Los Angeles residents."


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## Sexual Assault Suspect in Custody; LASD, LAPD Investigating

- Man captured after assault, Thursday, on P-4

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 3, 2004) The Sheriff's Department is holding a suspect in an alleged sexual assault that occurred about 3:50 p.m., Thursday, on the P-4 level of the Union Station parking garage.

A Sheriff's deputy arrested the man outside Metro Headquarters, Thursday afternoon. According to Transit Police Chief Capt. Dan Finkelstein, he resembles the description of a suspect in two other sexual assault incidents in the parking garage.

The Sheriff's Crime Lab is investigating and will compare DNA evidence in the previous incidents with the suspect's DNA sample.

The Sheriff's Department also is cooperating with the LAPD to see whether the suspect can be tied to several sexual assaults in the downtown area.

Finkelstein said the 19-year-old victim, a local junior college student, told deputies she had been led to a remote area of the P-4 level and sexually assaulted. Afterward, the suspect took her up to the street, where she flagged down a Sheriff's patrol car at Cesar Chavez and Vignes and reported the alleged assault.

The suspect later was identified in a photo line-up by a previous victim. Detectives from the Sheriff's Department and the LAPD were scheduled to question the suspect Friday afternoon.

As the investigation continues, Finkelstein said that, although he is "optimistic that this person is responsible for the sexual assaults, everyone should continue to be aware of their surroundings, safety and security, particularly in the parking structure."



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## Construction Work Begins on Eastside Extension

- Work in preparation for bridge over I-101

By JOSE UBALDO

(Sept. 7, 2004) Construction is scheduled to begin at Union Station, this week, on the first segment of the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension.

Crews will start preliminary work in preparation for a Caltrans project to construct a bridge over the I-101 Freeway. The work will continue for approximately five weeks.

Construction crews will pull up 250 feet of track between the baggage-handling road and the Metro Gold Line Union Station platform.

The road also provides access to the Metrolink and Amtrak platforms. Access will be maintained during construction.

Work hours will vary depending on construction activities. Some work will be done during peak hours, while other will occur between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m.

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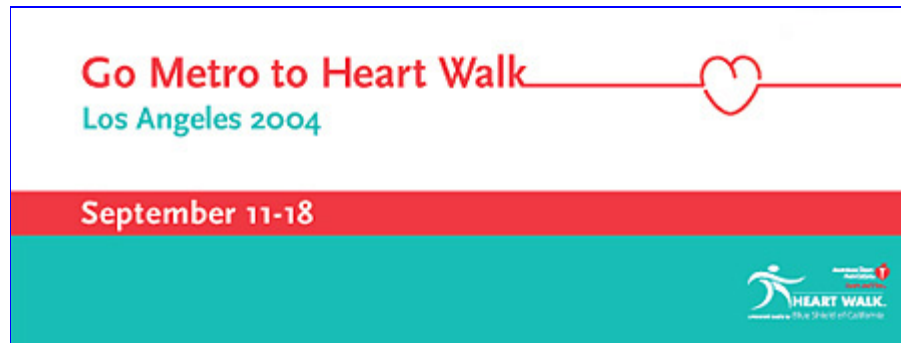
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Information: Click on image to visit [www.heartwalkla.org](http://www.heartwalkla.org)



## 15,000 Expected for Heart Walk Los Angeles, Sept. 11-18

By DAVE SOTERO

(Sept. 7, 2004) Get your exercise and help raise funds for lifesaving heart research by taking part in the American Heart Association's Heart Walk Los Angeles, Sept. 11-18.

More than 15,000 walkers are expected to participate in five walks throughout Los Angeles County to raise funds for research and education programs to fight heart disease and stroke.

Events feature a 5k walk, plus a Wellness Festival that will include health screenings, free food, kid zones, pet zones, music and fun.

## Times and locations

Heart Walks and Wellness Festival times and locations are:

- Saturday, Sept. 11, 9 a.m., Glendale Memorial Heart Center. Take Metro Bus lines 94, 180, 181, 183, 603; or Glendale Bee Line 1 and 2.
- Saturday, Sept. 11, 9 a.m., Santa Clarita City Hall. Take Santa Clarita Transit Line 1 and 2.
- Wednesday, Sept. 15, 5 p.m., Wells Fargo Museum, Downtown LA. Take Metro Red Line to the Pershing Square station or Metro Bus lines 76, 78, 79, 96, 484, 485, 487, 489, 490, 491; Foothill Transit lines 480, 482, 486, 488, 492, 494; or DASH B.
- Saturday, Sept. 18, 9 a.m., Mattel Headquarters, El Segundo. Take Metro Bus lines 124 or 232.
- Saturday, Sept. 18, 9 a.m., Veterans Administration Center, Westwood. Take Metro Bus lines 124 or 232.

For more information about Heart Walk, call 213-291-7000 or visit [www.heartwalkla.org](http://www.heartwalkla.org).

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"Under the Living Rock," Artist Samm Kunce's classical hanging garden of Venetian glass and striated granite at an entrance to the Metro Rail Civic Center station, is an oasis for thousands of transit riders and passers-by. And, a poem runs through it.



PHOTOS BY ROXANNE TAN

## Art Transforms Wall into Urban Respite at Civic Center Station

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Sept. 8, 2003) A hanging garden composed of glass and granite has transformed the First and Hill Street entrance to the Civic Center Metro Rail station into a lush landscape.

Artist Samm Kunce, whose work was completed August 29, was inspired by plant form, the shift of geologic layers and the beauty of organic forms.

The hanging garden, brilliant in hues of green, violet and red, is a mosaic of Venetian cake glass supported in an expanse of striated sand-colored granite.

A contrasting black granite ribbon etched with a passage from the Roman poet Ovid runs through the center of the piece. The mural runs the length of the 160-foot curved wall that frames the stairway and escalator entrance to the subway station.



A garden of stone and glass soothes the urban soul at Civic Center Station.

## National call for artists

Kunce is a Brooklyn-based artist

selected for the project by a panel commissioned by Metro Art. Her proposal for the classical garden in a seating area was chosen from some 198 proposals submitted in a national call for artists.



Under the direct supervision of Kunce, local subcontractors installed the intricate tile artwork in nearly six weeks.

The 63 Metro Rail stations and Gateway Transit Center feature the work of more than 85 artists commissioned to enhance the 73.1-mile transit system.

Metro policy allocates 0.5 percent of rail construction costs to the enhancement of the rail system through the arts.


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## Employees Now Can Submit Job Applications Electronically

- Applications can go by e-mail to Human Resources

(Sept. 8, 2004) MTA and PTSC employees now can submit employment applications to Human Resources electronically by e-mail, as well as by U.S. Mail or in person.

The new electronic application process offered to MTA and PTSC employees is a pilot program that, if successful, will be offered to the public.

The electronic application can be accessed through the Career Opportunities e-mails issued twice weekly by HR. It also is available by mousing over the "Information" link on the HR home page or by clicking on "Metro Careers," found on the green navigation bar, and then clicking on "Application Information." Check it out > [Job Application](#)

The "Job Application Information" page includes links to the electronic MS Word MTA or PTSC employment applications, to the supplemental application, and also to a .pdf application that can be downloaded and completed by hand.

The page also includes helpful hints, the addresses of the three Metro locations that accept job applications, how to mail an application, a sample resume, application and Jobline phone numbers, and how to request a receipt.

HR describes the electronic applications as "a major step forward in automating the application process, thus making it as easy as possible for employees to apply for MTA/PTSC jobs."




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## Study Says LA's Traffic is Nation's Worst, But has Moderated

(Sept. 8, 2004) An annual study of traffic gridlock, issued Tuesday by the respected Texas Transportation Institute (TTI), shows that traffic in the Los Angeles area remains the nation's worst – but that congestion has moderated somewhat despite a 7.4 percent increase in the region's population.

TTI's study shows the LA-Long Beach-Santa Ana area experienced a decline in annual hours of delay per traveler from 114 in 1992 to 94 hours in 2001 and then to 93 hours in 2002, the latest year surveyed. No other very large metropolitan area showed a decline.

The Los Angeles metropolitan area's gridlock ranked ahead of San Francisco with 73 hours' delay; Washington, D.C. with 67 hours; Chicago with 56 hours and Boston with 54 hours' delay.

TTI's "travel time index," a comparison of peak-period travel times with travel during off-peak hours, indicates that the LA metropolitan area remained steady at 1.77 from 2001 to 2002. That means a 20-minute trip in off-peak hours would take about 35 minutes in peak period.

## Two other areas remained steady

The Boston and Philadelphia metropolitan areas were the only others of similar size where the travel time index rating remained steady.

The TTI study shows that roadway congestion cost each person in the LA metropolitan area \$879 in 2002, down from \$896 in 2000. On the other hand, public transportation in the LA area saved peak-period travelers 19 hours in 2002, up from 11 hours in 2000.

Carpool lanes added in the LA metropolitan area over the past 10 years, along with increases in the bus fleet and the Freeway Service Patrol, are credited with helping moderate traffic congestion.

Metro's Short Range Transportation Plan for the next six years also expects to reduce automobile emissions by 50 percent from the 2001 levels.

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## Families Are 'Extra Arm' for Metro Employees at Outreach Events

By RICH MORALLO

(Sept. 9, 2004) Many Division Ambassador Council (DAC) members have an "extra arm" to help them when they promote ridership on Metro Bus and Metro Rail during community outreach activities.

"Meet my family," said DAC member Nicole Hall as she stood behind a Metro information table with her family during the recent Family Health and Safety Fair at the Nakaoka Community Center in Gardena.

Hall introduced her husband, Johnavah Sr., her two daughters, Janae and Janaeja, and son, Johnavah. Almost forgetting the smallest member of her group, she smiled and said, "And this is my five-year-old niece, Kaira. "



From left, Nicole Hall and daughters Janaeja and Janae, with niece Kaira in front.

To increase awareness of public transit services, DAC members come from the ranks of the bus operators, mechanics and service attendants who volunteer their personal time to talk to Los Angeles families about Metro.

### Families help out

"Talking about our Metro jobs and services on the weekends or when we are off can still be fun, especially when we have our families with us," said Hall. DAC staff also encourages students not to tag or vandalize Metro vehicles and property.

Throughout the day Janae, a seventh grader, and Janaeja, a fifth grader, helped their mom pass out bus and rail safety checklist pamphlets to Gardena residents. Also doing his share for Metro, third-grader Johnavah delighted visitors to the table as he passed out Metro bags.

"I'm glad I came," said Janae, who later visited the information tables of various health care services at the Nakaoka Community Center.

"She wants to be a pediatrician," explained Hall, who along with another Metro Bus operator, Kathleen Martin, spent most of their time answering questions on bus schedules, routes and Metro destinations.

PHOTOS: RICH MORALLO

### Labor Day volunteer

The next weekend Martin volunteered to work at the



Kathleen and Steve Martin

Labor Day Health Festival held on Compton Boulevard, a half block away from the Compton Metro Blue Line Station.

Husband Steve came along and helped put up the 10-foot tent that would shelter the Metro volunteers from the sun as they talked about safety near buses and passed out pop-up

trains and pencils stenciled with "Safety Begins With Me."

"People ask me how they can get to where they need to go and what Metro service is close to where they live," said Martin.

As she listened to the questions from the Metro booth visitors and passed out bus schedules, Steve Martin blew up colorful Safety's First balloons to decorate the booth.

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## Non-Contract Pay Hike Coming in Sept. 17 Paychecks

- Retro checks also will be issued

(Sept. 9, 2004) Paychecks due out Sept. 17 will include more money for non-contract employees – the first increment of the 2.5 percent raise granted in FY 2004.

Also coming is a retro check covering the period of July 1 through Aug. 28. Those checks will average roughly \$250 before taxes for many employees, according to Stefan Chasnov, Human Resources director.

It's an across-the-board pay increase, Chasnov notes, but "it really is intended to reward performance for last fiscal year. It's recognition for work well done in what was a very difficult year."

To receive the pay raise, non-contract employees must be regular, full-time employees on active status as of Friday, Sept. 10. They must have received effective, commendable or outstanding performance ratings in FY 2004.

The raise will be pro-rated for those hired during FY 2004. Employees who are still serving their new-hire probationary period will not receive the raise until their probation is successfully completed.

## Maximum pay range

The 2.5 percent pay increase also will be extended to non-contract employees whose current salaries are at or above their maximum pay range.

Employees who were promoted during FY 2004 will receive a "blended pay raise" that will take into account both pay rates and the length of time the employee was in each pay rate that year.

Employees who were on unpaid leave of absence for more than a month during FY 2004 will receive a raise reduced by the length of the absence. Those on paid leave are not affected.

As-needed employees, interns and employees affected by the reduction in force (RIF) are not eligible for the pay hike.

Questions about the pay raise should be directed to HR Supervisor Carmen Mayor at 922-5214 or to Chasnov at 922-5223.

## Run the numbers

To figure the amount of your pay hike, multiply your FY 2004 salary by .025. To determine your new salary, multiply your FY 2004 salary by 1.025. This calculation won't work for those receiving a "blended pay raise."



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## DNA Links Suspect to Sexual Assaults in Parking Garage

- Victim also identifies man during a Sheriff's lineup

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 10, 2004) DNA evidence confirms that a man arrested outside the Gateway Building, last week, committed two sexual assaults in the Union Station parking garage, according to Detective Jeanine Lum of the Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau.

One victim also identified Steven Jackson, 33, now being held in lieu of \$100,000 bail at the Men's Central Jail, during a live lineup Thursday evening.

With this evidence in hand, Lum now will file two sexual assault charges against Jackson. Charges in four other cases, investigated by LAPD Central Division detectives, are pending against Jackson.

Jackson was arrested at the intersection of Cesar Chavez and Vignes, Sept. 2, following an alleged sexual assault on the P-4 level of the parking structure. The victim flagged down a Sheriff's patrol car and pointed out Jackson as the man who assaulted her.

The DNA evidence, gathered from the victim in a July 16 sexual assault and from the suspect following the Sept. 2 assault, was analyzed by the Sheriff's Crime Lab. The analysis conclusively linked Jackson with the first assault, Lum said.

### Suspected of other attempts

Jackson also is suspected in an attempted sexual assault, July 22, in the Union Station parking garage and in another attempt on July 31 on the Metro Red Line.

Lum pointed to the cooperation between her department and LAPD Central Division detectives as important in gathering evidence that brought the investigation to a successful conclusion.

"It took all of us to bring this guy to custody," she said.

"I couldn't be prouder of our team," said Transit Police Chief Capt. Dan Finkelstein. "This was an emotionally charged situation and Detective Lum worked with her counterparts at LAPD and was very diligent in tying up all these aspects."



Sheriff's Detective Jeanine Lum says composite sketch, drawn from a victim's description of her assailant, very closely matches the appearance of sexual assault suspect Steven Jackson, now in custody at the Men's Central Jail. (Photocopied sketch courtesy of the Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau.)

Finkelstein noted that the investigation, which involved other area police departments and parole offices, also led to the arrest of a different suspect who allegedly molested two boys in Redondo Beach.

Evidence turned up following Jackson's arrest also may be of interest to law enforcement agencies in other western states, he said.

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Metro's new Employee Assistance Program counselors are, from left, Debbie Silveria, John Pyle, Hope Morrow and Steve Degelsmith. Back row, from left, are Metro program coordinator Carol Holben, Compsych representative Steve Danzy and Metro instructor Arnold Johnson Jr.



PHOTOS BY SHANTAY IOSIA

## Emotional Events Can Leave Lasting Mark on Employees

- Employee Assistance Program Provides Counseling

By SHANTAY IOSIA

(Sept. 10, 2004) After almost a year, Oscar Estrada is still haunted by the memory of his first day as a train operator. It was the day a driver decided to challenge the Metro Blue Line and lost.

Although Estrada has returned to full duty, the grief occasionally surfaces as he remembers the accident. Recently, Estrada was required to relieve an operator who had been in a similar collision. Estrada completed the assignment but not without rousing dormant memories of his own experiences.

"I broke out in a cold sweat and started crying," says Estrada, a train operator since Sept. 2003. But he suppressed his emotions and managed to relieve the operator and return the train to the yard.

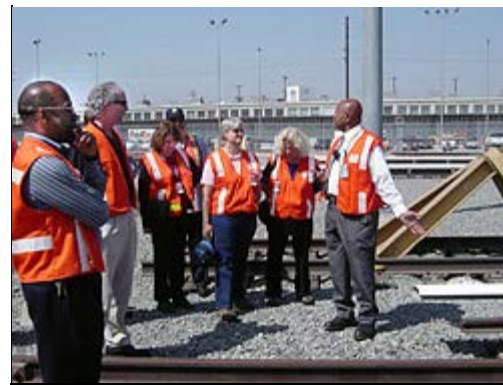
Hector Guerrero, Metro Blue Line rail division transportation manager, says accidents on the line are not uncommon.

"When there is an accident, everyone is affected," Guerrero says. "The other operators feel



for the operator involved and other people relive their own experiences."

Metro's goal is to ensure that the operators are given the best counseling and provisions in a timely manner, Guerrero says.



Instructor Arnold Johnson shows the EAP counselors the electricity-powered third rail, one of the more dangerous parts of the subway system.

Metro will be contracting with a new company for the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) beginning Oct. 1. In addition to providing guidance to employees facing life challenges, the EAP also provides psychological support for employees involved in fatal or serious accidents under the Traumatic Injury Program (TIP).



Johnson explains rail hazards and demonstrates proper procedures for handling a stationary train.

Counselors, Debbie Silveria, John Pyle, Hope Morrow, Steve Degelsmith and ComPsych representative Steve Danzy, completed their two-day training in August.

They learned the unique hazards the operators face daily. All of these counselors are contracted by ComPsych and specialize in critical incident debriefing.

Through TIP, the counselors will be notified at the time of an accident and will communicate

with the supervisor on duty to discuss the best form of assistance.

The counselors may report to the scene or may wait for a more appropriate time to contact the operator to provide support. The counselors will assist the operators until they are able to return to work or refer them to additional help if necessary.

Metro's Carol Holben, and Guerrero, coordinated the program with various managers and instructors to prepare the counselors for probable situations.

"They are trained to take precautions to prevent accidents, but the operators cannot help their outside environments and vehicles or pedestrians who choose to challenge the train," Guerrero says. "There is no way a 16-ton train can stop on a dime."


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## Crews Hurry to Complete Orange Line Work On Time

(Sept. 10, 2004) Construction on the Metro Orange Line is getting back to normal as work crews hurry to complete construction of busy intersections and other areas affected by the 23-day court-ordered work stoppage.

Contractor Shimmick/Obayashi is about 65 percent re-mobilized, according to Construction Manager Mark Van Gessel, and should be back to full strength in the next several weeks. Metro Construction is working closely with the contractor to overcome the four-month delay caused by the work suspension and other setbacks, including the requirement to remove contaminated earth from some areas along the right-of-way.

In the meantime, construction is proceeding on the transitway, the bike and pedestrian path and on the station platforms.

[Click on images to enlarge.](#)



A compactor compresses the newly laid asphalt on the transitway at the Woodman Avenue crossing.



Construction workers tend a paving machine laying a new surface where the Metro Orange Line crosses Woodman Avenue near Oxnard Street in Van Nuys.



Steam rises from fresh asphalt as a paving machine lays a new road surface on Woodman Avenue near Oxnard Street in Van Nuys.



- Photos by Ned Racine

A worker throws chunk of sidewalk into the blade of a bulldozer during the reconstruction of a customer parking lot south of the transitway at Woodman Avenue in Sherman Oaks.



A bulldozer hauls material from a trench in a parking lot just east of the newly paved Woodman Avenue in Sherman Oaks. The parking lot will serve businesses south of the transitway.



A worker hoses down dust kicked up by a bulldozer shifting dirt during construction of a customer parking lot south of the transitway at Woodman Avenue in Sherman Oaks.

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## Committee to Consider Borrowing \$1.14 Billion for Regional Projects

- Development planned at Metro Rail Division 20
- Plan to extend Wilshire bus-only lanes also on agendas

(Sept. 14, 2004) A motion to borrow \$1.14 billion for regional transportation projects, build student housing and a parking lot at Metro Rail Division 20 and sell a parcel near the North Hollywood subway station are on Board committee agendas in September.

Committees also will hear reports on a strategy to extend the Wilshire buses-only lanes and on a change in Metro's policy on employee domestic partnerships.

**Item 12, Additional Funding for Transportation Projects:** The Planning and Programming Committee will consider a motion to borrow \$1.14 billion against Proposition C sales tax revenues to fund the Exposition Light Rail Project and other transportation projects currently on hold.

The proposed action would help Southern California meet air quality requirements in the Federal Clean Air Act. Unless the region acts promptly on the projects, the Federal Highway Administration could delay or deny funding, permits or environmental clearances for local projects.

Combined with \$171.1 million in Proposition C cash, the total \$1.314.2 billion would provide \$240.9 million for the Expo Line; \$254.2 million for an I-5 carpool lane between Route 134 and Route 170; \$541.4 million for an I-5 carpool lane between Route 91 and Route 605; \$85 million for Alameda Corridor East improvements; and \$192.7 million for a connector between the I-5 and Route 14, and other projects in the deferred Call for Projects.

**Item 15, Development at Metro Rail Yard:** The Planning and Programming Committee will consider a motion authorizing the CEO to negotiate with a firm that wants to build 270 student housing units and a parking lot for 440 vehicles on about four acres of the 50-acre Metro Red Line Division 20.

The housing development would serve students at the Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arch), just across Santa Fe

## Meetings for September:

- Executive Management and Audit, 11:30 a.m.,  
Wednesday, Sept. 15
- Planning and Programming, 1 p.m.,  
Wednesday, Sept. 15
- Finance and Budget, 10:30 a.m.,  
Thursday, Sept. 16
- Construction, 11:30 a.m.,  
Thursday, Sept. 16
- Operations, 1 p.m.,  
Thursday, Sept. 16
- Board of Directors Meeting,  
Thursday, Sept. 23

Avenue from the rail yard. Both students and Metro employees would be permitted to use the parking lot.

According to a staff report, there is a need for additional parking for Metro employees at Division 20 as a result of the consolidation of some rail operations activities.

**Item 11, Wilshire Buses-Only Lanes:** The Planning and Programming Committee will hear a report on a strategy to extend the buses-only lanes on Wilshire Boulevard.

Last March, Metro opened the peak-period buses-only lanes in both directions on Wilshire between Federal and Centinela Avenues. The City Council's transportation committee voted last week in favor of making the lanes permanent.

A Metro staff analysis indicates that the lane could be extended east to the San Diego Freeway to ease eastbound afternoon peak-period traffic. Extending the buses-only lane west of Centinela Avenue into Santa Monica would be "a logical next step," the staff report says, to achieve a continuous lane.

**Item 8, Domestic Partnerships Policy:** The Executive Management and Audit Committee will hear a report on Metro's intention to adopt the state's legal definition of domestic partnership.

Effective Jan. 1, 2005, the California Domestic Partner Rights and Responsibilities Act will give state-registered domestic partners nearly all the legal rights, benefits, responsibilities, duties and obligations currently available only to married couples.

The state law will limit partnerships to opposite sex partners over age 62 and to same sex adult partners. Metro's current policy extends benefits to same sex or opposite sex domestic partners over age 18 who have signed an "Affidavit of Domestic Partnership."

In order to minimize the impact of the change, the report says employees currently registered as domestic partners will be allowed to retain their status as long as they are employed by Metro or until their domestic partnership is dissolved.

Adopting the state's domestic partner definition, the report says, will bring Metro into compliance with state law and will make these policies easier to administer. It also will give the agency tighter control over its benefits program for domestic partners.

**Item 19, Sale of North Hollywood Property:** The Finance and Budget Committee will consider a motion to sell a 7,631-square foot parcel at the intersection of Lankershim Boulevard and Weddington Street in North Hollywood to the LA Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA).

The property would be used by CRA to complete an approximately six-acre site extending from Weddington to Chandler that will be used for a development that will include 180 residential units.

Metro purchased the property from CRA in 1997 for \$154,089 as the site of a blast release shaft for the Metro Red Line. The agency proposes to sell it back to CRA for \$298,000.





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Girl Scout Troop 420 traveled on Metro Rail with Deputies Scott Schneider and Kevlin Wong.



PHOTOS: RICH MORALLO

## Metro Volunteers Blanket Patriot Weekend Community Events

By RICH MORALLO

(Sept. 14, 2004) On a weekend dedicated to Patriot's Day and honoring the heroes of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Metro volunteers spread throughout the South Bay, serving the community by passing out transit and safety guidelines at public events.

In the shadow of a huge tree in San Pedro's Point Fermin Park, Jovino "Benny" Lorenzo talked to families about transit services. He staffed a Metro information table during the FilAm Arts and Cultural Festival, which drew 30,000 attendees.

"This is a good chance to get involved, meet people and see what they think about our bus and rail system," said Lorenzo.

While Lorenzo, Dixie Dorsett, Kathleen Martin and Alice Brass handled the crowds in San Pedro, Bob Leabow stepped inside a huge tent in Watts and joined other agency representatives participating in the Unite Watts Day Celebration.



A member of the California Conservation Corps took home a bagful of information from the Metro booth at Point Fermin Park in San Pedro.

## Ran out of supplies

Leabow, a rail safety volunteer, ran out of supplies within a couple of hours. "The youngsters grabbed up the bus safety checklists, pencils, and safety coloring books."

Just as Leabow was handing out his last pair of crayons, four miles to the west Sheriff's Deputies Scott Schneider and Kevlin Wong were saying "Hello" to the 25 girls in Girl Scout Troop 420 at the Metro Green Line's Crenshaw/105 Station .

The group boarded the eastbound train and met Division Ambassador Council (DAC) member Louvenia Harris at the Rosa Parks Station.

Harris spent the rest of the day with the scouts, showing them how to be safe on both Metro Bus and Rail. Afterwards, she even rode two-seat bicycles with her guests in Long Beach.

**'Had lots of fun'**

"My legs and thighs hurt, but we all had lots of fun," the bus operator added.

Meanwhile Nicole Hall, another DAC member, spent her Saturday afternoon at the Macedonia Baptist Church "Back to School Campaign" where she also talked to neighborhood youngsters about bus and street safety.

At yet another community function, South Bay General Manager Dana Coffey and long-time service attendant Arthur Winston represented the agency at the Alpine Village Oktoberfest.

"There was good food, singing and dancing there," said the 98-year-old Winston, who was recently recognized for his inspirational leadership by the state legislature in Sacramento.



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Crews coned off a portion of First Street at the 101 Freeway for construction work.



PHOTOS BY JOSE UBALDO

## Construction Work Begins on Eastside Extension

- Utilities are being relocated in preparation for tunneling

Contractor crews are working in Boyle Heights to prepare the way for construction of the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension.

Utilities are being relocated in the vicinity of First Street and I-101. Crews are excavating trenches to relocate sewer lines, storm drains and water pipelines in preparation for the 1.8-mile tunnel beneath Boyle Heights.

Two underground stations – Mariachi Plaza and Soto Street Station – will be located along the tunnel segment.

Meanwhile, crews are pulling up 250 feet of track south of the Metro Gold Line platform at Union Station. The area will be the ramp of a bridge Caltrans will construct over the 101 Freeway.



A construction worker maneuvers a pavement cutter along First Street

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Employees pour out of the Gateway Building during Tuesday's fire drill. The evacuation was accomplished in less than 20 minutes.



PHOTOS BY BILL HEARD

## Emergency Evacuation is 'Smoothest Thus Far' at Gateway

By SHANTAY IOSIA

(Sept. 15, 2004) Almost 1,800 Metro employees evacuated the Gateway building in less than 20 minutes, Tuesday, making it one of the smoothest drills thus far, says Brian Soto, director of General Services.

The alarm was scheduled around 10 a.m. and Metro Security completed the building sweep by 10:30 a.m.

"That's a good amount of time considering that all the people have to walk from the 25th floor to the ground level and then across the street," says Bob Skarseth, Facilities Maintenance supervisor.

Sheriff's Lt. Michael Herek, who is responsible for security, agrees and attributes the success to increased resources, improved cooperation and immediate communication. It was the first time the agency involved other organizations in an emergency drill.

## In Case of an Emergency:

- Leave behind all belongings, including cell phones and laptops
- Notify a Floor Warden if you are unable to go down the stairs
- Women should have shoes appropriate for emergency evacuations
- Use the center stairwell and exit as quickly as possible

General Services oversaw the evacuation as Metro Security cleared the building. The Sheriff's Department restricted roadways, shepherding hundreds to the bus layover zone on the corner of Vignes and Caesar Chavez.

Fire Department observer

Metro's high-rise inspector, James Stewart of the LA City Fire Department, observed the process and commented on the efficiency of the emergency exercise.

During the drill, all communication was coordinated from the Incident Command Post, located in the Denny's parking lot. A representative from each agency reported to the Command Post, where they had access to all emergency radio frequencies.

"There was a lot of cooperation," Herek says. This was the first time we did a multi-agency combination and I am really pleased."

Phyllis Meng, General Services supervisor, says she tries to emulate a true emergency by making the drill a surprise. Despite efforts to keep the drill spontaneous, rumors of the evacuation cleared many of the upper floors before the alarms sounded.

"The purpose is to train all building occupants get out of the building as quickly and safely as possible in case of a potential terrorist attack or other emergency," she says.



Holding hands, the children from the Child Care Center joined in the emergency exercise.



A Sheriff's deputy holds back traffic as Gateway employees cross Cesar Chavez Boulevard.



Division 7 Operator David Terrell distributed bottles of water to employees gathered for a head-count.



Marking the progress of the emergency drill at the Incident Command Post are Sheriff's deputies Britta Kjellstrand, James Johnson and Justin Diez. Supervising are Sheriff's Sgt. Sandy Nitz and Metro Security Sgt. French Stewart.






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Westside/Central General Manager Jim McElroy

## Westside/Central GM Jim McElroy Resigns

- GM plans to return to Sacramento area to be with family

(Sept. 15, 2004) Jim McElroy, general manager of the Westside/Central Service Sector, has offered his resignation, effective Oct. 15. He plans to return to the Sacramento area to be with his family.

"Jim is a very talented person," said Deputy CEO John Catoe. "This is a loss to the agency." No replacement has

been chosen for McElroy.

Catoe noted that McElroy established the Westside/Central Governance Council and had continued development of plans for construction of a new Division 6 to replace the Venice division.

"He also was restructuring his management team and had a great relationship with the municipal operators," Catoe said. "He will be missed."

McElroy joined Metro in June, 2003, and was named manager of West Hollywood Division 7. He was promoted to service sector general manager in September, 2003.

Prior to joining the agency, McElroy was general manager of Unitrans, the Davis, Calif., transit service. He also was chairman of the Sacramento region's transit management coordinating committee and served four terms on the board of the California Transit Association, including a term as chair of the association.

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PHOTO BY BETH KRANDA



Division 1 Line Captains are, from left, Roberto Sarabia, Raul Gomez, Henry Madrid and Sammy Morales.

## Division 1 Commissions Line Captains to Monitor Metro Bus Lines

By SHANTAY IOSIA

(Sept. 16, 2004) Central City Division 1 has revamped old ideas to create Line Captains, an initiative intended to target and resolve issues on Metro Bus lines.

The Line Captains will serve as an intermediary between operators and the management team, encouraging open dialogue and effective resolutions to reduce accidents and improve the lines' performance.

Line Captains are experienced bus operators with distinguished records who have volunteered or been recommended by a superior. They must have no avoidable accidents or customer complaints and no more than one instance of sick calls or missouts during the year.

Transportation Manager Sonja Owens and assistant managers, Beth Kranda and Thom Mattocks, have recognized 24 Line Captains and may be considering adding more.

### 'Respected by their peers'

"We look at their record and we also look at them as individuals who are respected by their peers and carry themselves well and we place them over that line," Owens says.

Employee participation and consistent feedback is the one thing that's been missing, says Kranda. But the division has developed a way to encourage participation.

"We started off with people who were already motivated, giving them an opportunity to voice their concerns who feel that in the past they haven't been listened to," says Mattocks. "Here's an opportunity to change that."

New employees have been identified as presenting high risks of

accidents and the division has also targeted lines for improvement.

### **Present their concerns**

Line Captains are able to present such concerns as road hazards, scheduling issues or questions of professionalism to managers in a monthly meeting, giving management a different perspective when making operational decisions.

"We've been thinking about this for months," Owens says. "It's an old program revisited."

Since their first meeting, Aug. 18, the Line Captains have taken the initiative to create surveys and generate feedback for the management team, Kranda says.

"The team concept is prevalent here," Owens says. "We are their leaders but we want them to feel that we're a part of their team. They can make a difference with us."

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## Metro Liner Makes 'Sneak Peek' Appearance on Gateway Plaza

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 16, 2004) What's silver and gray, 60 feet long, has three doors, room for 58 passengers to sit down and bends in the middle?

It's the new Metro Liner articulated bus, and it was on display, Thursday, on Gateway Plaza. The vehicle, with its unique aerodynamic styling is the first of a new class of 200 the agency has ordered for operation on the Metro Orange Line and on other heavily traveled transit corridors.

The streamlined coach, with its huge curved windshield, fender skirts and mid-section pleated bellows, drew the immediate attention of pedestrians on the Plaza – exactly the reaction planners hoped to get for the vehicle.

### 'Biggest leap in styling'

"This is the most advanced transit vehicle to hit North America, ever," says John Drayton, Metro's vehicle acquisition manager. "It really is the biggest leap in styling and appearance inside and out our industry has seen since the mid-1970s."

The \$632,000 bus, built by North American Bus Industries (NABI), sports three 44-inch wide doors for easier boarding and off-loading. The 58 brightly patterned seats are contoured and padded for extra comfort. There also are two wheelchair securement areas and three

PHOTOS BY BILL HEARD



The advanced-design Metro Liner articulated bus will be used on the Metro Orange Line and on other heavily traveled transit corridors.



The huge curved windshield is one of the Metro Liner's most prominent features. The heads sign can display multiple colors.



Brightly patterned seats are contoured and padded for passenger comfort.

bicycle racks positioned among the seats.

"We pushed NABI very hard to make the interior styling very comfortable for our passengers," says Drayton. "This is probably the most comfortable interior we've seen on a transit vehicle."



The operator's station was designed for comfort, with remote controlled mirrors and read-at-a-glance console.

Powering the Metro Liner is a six-cylinder 320-hp, 8.9-liter Cummins CNG engine designed from scratch to handle the heavy-duty demands of Los Angeles terrain and traffic. Previously, most CNG engines were adaptations of diesel engine designs.

#### **'Runs smoother, quieter'**

The engine has 30 percent more horsepower than the four-cylinder engines installed in conventional buses and, according to Drayton, "runs smoother and is 50 percent quieter."

With 12 tanks containing 28,000 cubic feet of compressed natural gas, the Metro Liner will have an effective operating range of 400 miles. "It's the first time the transit industry will be able to get a realistic, full-day's range out of a CNG articulated vehicle," says Drayton.

The first 30 of the silver and gray Metro Liner coaches, due for delivery to Los Angeles by June 30, 2005, will be designated for operation on the Metro Orange Line. The remaining 170, sporting a wide red stripe for use on Metro Rapid lines, are to be delivered by June 30, 2006.



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Wilshire/Vermont Station Entrance Relocated for Construction

By RICK JAGER

(Sept. 16, 2004) The main entrance to the Metro Red Line station at Wilshire and Vermont has been closed and relocated to Wilshire and Shatto Place because of on-site construction work.

New elevators have been installed at the temporary entrance and signs have been posted advising patrons of the closure and where to access the station.

The closure of the main entrance is expected to last approximately 19 months. The closure is necessary to allow excavation and construction to support the mixed-use development proposed for the station.

The site is being developed by Wilshire Vermont Housing Partners LLC. When completed, it will provide approximately 448 apartments, 35,000 square feet of retail space and a large street-level public plaza fronting the subway portal.

The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) also is proposing an 800-student middle school on the site.


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## Justice Department Suit Alleges Religious Discrimination by Metro

- Bus operator trainee didn't want to work on the Sabbath

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 17, 2004) The U.S. Department of Justice, in a suit filed this week, is accusing Metro of religious discrimination against a former bus operator trainee who was employed by the agency for about a month in 2002.

The suit claims that Metro "enforced an unnecessary requirement" for Operations Division employees to be available to staff the agency's 'round-the-clock, 365-days-a-year transit service schedule.

Metro's recruitment and selection policy, HR 3-1, prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, veteran status or disability.

The Justice Department bases its discrimination allegations on the case of Henry Asher, a member of the Jewish faith. The Tarzana man was hired by Metro on June 17, 2002, and was discharged on July 22, 2002, after he had two missouts during operator training – a stated cause for dismissal under the agency's employment policy.

Prior to employment by Metro, bus operator candidates must sign as part of their job applications a statement that they are available for work on day, any shift.

Asher initially agreed to this requirement, but later said he wanted a schedule that would allow him to avoid working on the Jewish Sabbath and on eight religious holidays.

Metro's bargaining agreement with the UTU includes strong seniority provisions, under which UTU members bid twice a year during "shakeups" for work assignments and job locations on the basis of length of service.

As part of the suit, the Justice Department seeks a change in Metro's employment practices, along with monetary damages and "other relief" for Asher and others.

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Rail~Volution host committee members showcase transit-oriented developments at press conference held Friday at the Metro Gold Line Del Mar Station construction site of a major housing and retail development. From left, Dan Rosenfeld, Urban Partners; Mary Simon, Rail~Volution director; Michael Dieden, Creative Housing Associates; Susan Kamei, ULI; Jack Kyser, Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation; Joyce Perkins, Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative; Metro CEO Roger Snoble; Pasadena Mayor Bill Bogaard, and Stephanos Polyzoides, Moule & Polyzoides.



PHOTO BY SHANTAY IOSIA

## \$4 Billion-Plus in New Development Planned Around Metro Rail

- Rail~Volution conference participants will tour development sites

(Sept. 17, 2004) Developers and their partners are investing more than \$4 billion in at least 30 new development projects around Metro stations throughout Los Angeles County, according to an informal survey conducted by Metro.

The survey information, which was released during a Metro news conference, Friday, at the Metro Gold Line's Del Mar station, underscored the five-day national Rail~Volution conference that begins this weekend at the Renaissance Hotel in Hollywood.

Rail~Volution will showcase Southern California's efforts to redesign itself to build communities around modern, efficient public transportation systems. Transit advocates from around the country are scheduled to attend the 10th annual conference.

The 30 new transit-oriented projects, all in various development stages, are located in downtown Los Angeles, Chinatown, Long Beach, North Hollywood, Lincoln Heights, Hollywood and Pasadena.



PHOTO BY ROXANNE TAN



Metro Hollywood Apartments is a major joint development project in Hollywood that provides affordable housing, commercial space and daycare facilities immediately adjacent to the Hollywood/Western Metro Red Line Station.

### Groundswell of development

The projects indicate a groundswell of development activity that is helping to reshape the region's urban landscape. Rail~Volution participants will have the opportunity to tour the sites prior to the official opening of the conference on Monday.

"The Los Angeles region is reinventing itself to build better communities for residents who are now dealing with urban sprawl, traffic congestion, a housing shortage and reduced quality of life," said CEO Roger Snoble. "As the Metro system expands, more and more Angelenos will be able to live, work and play close to transit. What we're witnessing today is a growing trend in development around rail that can improve mobility, recreate communities and spur economic development."

More than \$1 billion has already been invested in developments around Metro stations, particularly the Metro Red Line, where new joint development has helped revitalize portions of downtown Los Angeles and Hollywood.

More development is planned around many Metro Gold Line Stations from downtown to Pasadena, and within the Transit Mall loop of the Metro Blue Line in Long Beach.

Notable examples are Del Mar Station and Mission Meridian Village in Pasadena, Sunset and Vine in Hollywood, and CityPlace in Long Beach.

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**"Go one year without a missout, without an unexcused absence or unverified appointment."**

Division 5 Operator Ronald Johnson won his bet with Transportation Manager Patsy Goens.

## Meeting Challenge Earned Ronald Johnson More Than a Free Lunch

By RICH MORALLO

(Sept. 17, 2004) That was the challenge transportation manager Patsy Goens gave to Ronald Johnson, last year, at Arthur Winston Division 5.

And to make the proposition interesting, she said a free lunch would be at stake.

"At the time I knew I had a sure bet," says Goens. "Last year I had to counsel Ronald - he had a history of missouts, and I thought that there was no way he'd be able to clean up his attendance record."

But, more importantly, Goens wanted to help the bus operator. She wanted to motivate Johnson, to somehow make him change his attitude toward attendance and punctuality.

Time passed. Months flew by. Goens transferred to Carson Division 18.

### A year without a missout

One day her phone rang. It was Johnson. Not only had he gone a year without a missout, he had thrown in two extra months of perfect attendance for good measure.

"It was difficult, not being absent or late for 14 months," said Johnson, who has five years with the agency. "But my job was at stake; I had to buckle down."

Moreover, Johnson did not want to disappoint his manager, who had cared enough to sit down with him and point out the eventual consequence of his absences and tardiness.

When they head out soon to a favorite local seafood restaurant to settle the wager, Goens will foot the bill, but it won't be a hardship.



"I'm saving room for Jello," jokes Johnson.

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Division 1 employees brought dishes typical of their countries or regions of origin, including Mexico, Puerto Rico, Guatemala, Africa, the Philippines and American Soul food.



PHOTOS: BETH KRANDA

## Ethnic Food Dishes Bridge Cultural Chasms at Division 1

By SHANTAY IOSIA

(Sept. 21, 2004) Division 1 has decided to bridge cultural chasms, one dish at a time.

Operators Addie Allison, Rose Munford, Sandra McGhee and Lisa Altillano collaborated with Transportation Manager Sonja Owens to organize the division's first International Food Festival.

Participants brought dishes typical of their countries of origin, giving everyone in the division an opportunity to taste the flavors of the world.

Puerto Rico, Guatemala, Africa and the Philippines were a few of the countries represented at the Sept. 3 event.

"If anything can bring people together and put a smile on their face, it's food," Owens says.

### Crew held fundraisers

The coordinating crew held fundraisers for about six weeks to plan for the event. Each week they sold plates of spaghetti, hot links and macaroni and cheese.

With the money raised they were able to



Operator Roberto Ramirez has a plate full of festival goodies. Below, Operator Jaime Figueroa is in charge of music for the festival.

purchase all the meat, utensils, decorations and desert. Each table was set and anchored with a centerpiece symbolizing each country, or in some cases a continent.

"It turned out well," says McGhee, who helped run the fundraisers. "There was a lot of participation from employees."

Transportation joined the maintenance crew and enjoyed the festivities with their children and spouses. There was plenty of food, music and karaoke to commence the long weekend.



Owens promised to make this an annual event.

"It's a celebration of sisterhood and brotherhood," she says. "And what better way of bringing everyone together than with food and music."



Several hundred  
Division 1  
employees  
enjoyed the  
International  
Food Festival.

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## Change of General Managers in 2 Service Sectors

- **David Armijo to Succeed McElroy in Westside/Central**
- **Richard Hunt to be SF Valley's New GM**

(Sept. 21, 2004) General Manager David Armijo will leave his post in the San Fernando Valley to succeed Jim McElroy, who resigned last week as general manager of the Westside/Central Service Sector.



Richard Hunt will lead the San Fernando Valley Service Sector.

Richard Hunt, deputy executive officer for vehicle technology and support, will succeed Armijo as general manager of the San Fernando Valley sector. Hunt also will remain in charge of development and acquisition of vehicles, including the new articulated buses.

The transition will begin within the next two weeks. McElroy, Westside/Central general manager since September 2003, resigned effective Oct. 15. He plans to return to the Sacramento area to be with his family.

### Will face major challenges

"I'm very pleased to be able to transfer David Armijo to the Westside/Central sector and to appoint Richard Hunt to lead the San Fernando Valley sector," said Deputy CEO John Catoe. "Both sectors face major challenges that include operation of many Consent Decree lines, construction of a new division, and the start-up of a totally new type of service on the Metro Orange Line. David and Richard are the right leaders to handle these challenges."

In a message to Valley sector employees, Armijo said, "I will miss the Valley and the team of professionals that have served with me since the inception of the sector, July 1, 2002. Thank you for the support you have provided me."

In his new post, Armijo will be responsible for operations at divisions 6, 7 and 10. He also will oversee the planned development of a new Division 6, slated for completion in December 2006, and the expansion of Division 10, now being designed.

Noting that he led the Westside/Central sector for some months in 2003, Armijo said, "I know the players in the sector and have a lot of respect for their talents and abilities. It will be a pleasure to work with them again and help them be a successful team."



David Armijo will lead the Westside/Central Service Sector.

### **Will oversee Orange Line**

As general manager in the Valley, Hunt will oversee divisions 8 and 15, as well as operations on the Metro Orange Line with the new articulated Metro Liner buses he was responsible for developing and purchasing.

Of the vehicle technology and acquisition team, Hunt said, "They're a great group that's good to work with. Their energy level is always very high."

"I'm honored to be joining a very talented team in the Valley," he continued. "I want to do what I can to support their very good work. As the first sector to be organized, they set the standard."

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Division 10 mechanics and service attendants gathered for a team photo to mark their "How You Doin" win for July.



### Division 10 Maintenance Team Wins 'Outstanding Division' for July

(Sept. 22, 2004) Gateway Division 10 operates 291 buses – including 36 Metro Rapid coaches – that carry some 58 million passengers each year.

With Metro's second largest fleet and highest number of riders, it could be a maintenance headache, but the mechanics and service attendants have it under control. In July, the team won the "How You Doin" award for Outstanding Maintenance Division.



The traveling trophy for "Outstanding Maintenance Division" will rest, at least temporarily, in the Division 10 trophy case. Proudly holding the trophy are, from left, Jim Fulkerson, assistant maintenance manager, and Frank Lonyai, maintenance manager.

"We have an excellent team here," says Maintenance Manager Frank Lonyai. "They work hard and they are very dedicated employees. We have very talented mechanics and service attendants."

To score their win, Division 10 ranked first in new Worker's Compensation claims. The division also improved in such areas as bus cleanliness, road calls and attendance, Lonyai says.

"Over the last four to five months, Division 10 has really stepped to the forefront and has done quite well in cleanliness, on-time pullouts and Worker's Compensation claims," says

Mike Davis, Westside/Central financial services manager. "We've seen significant improvements in all three maintenance divisions in the sector."

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## Tiebreaker a Heartbreaker for Metro Mechanics at Regional Rodeo

(Sept. 22, 2004) The tiebreaker was a heartbreaker for Metro mechanics participating in last weekend's Southern California Regional Bus Rodeo – they were bested in the maintenance competition by the OCTA team.

Carson Division 18 mechanics Luke Logan, Javier Soria and Mina Ros racked up 1,070 points to tie with the OCTA mechanics for the top slot. But, in the tiebreaker event, the OCTA team managed to start their bus engine 49 seconds earlier than the Metro team.

Despite the regional disappointment, Logan, Soria and Ros will represent Metro in October at the APTA International Bus Rodeo in Atlanta. In 1997, a Gateway Division 10 won the international maintenance competition.

### Operator Castro placed 8th

Accompanying the mechanics to Atlanta will be San Gabriel Valley Division 9 Operator Luduvico Castro, who won Metro's Bus Rodeo in August, but placed eighth in the Southern California competition.

"Our team is excellent," said Steve Mullaly, maintenance committee coordinator. "We're looking forward to the competition in Atlanta."

Taking the top five positions in the regional maintenance event, hosted in Hemet by the Riverside Transit Authority, were OCTA, 1,070 points; Metro, 1,070; Santa Monica Big Blue Bus, 790; Golden Empire Transit, 765; and Foothill Transit, 755 points.

Bus operators scoring in the top five were Ron Dickey, Riverside Transit, 638 points; Michael Mayo, Omnitrans, 613; Felix Teston, Golden Empire Transit, 605; Robert Lugo, Montebello Bus Lines, 591; and Alonzo Valenzuela, OCTA, 590. Metro's Castro scored 554 points



Division 18 mechanics Luke Logan, Javier Soria and Mina Ros, shown here with General Manager Dana Coffey, were only 49 seconds from winning the SoCal Regional Bus Rodeo. Below, Division 9 Operator Luduvico will represent Metro at the APTA international competition in Atlanta.



to take eighth place.

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This turbo diesel engine fills up on vegetable oil and the determination of Metro's Arthur Brown, a scheduling system analyst who converted his 1983 Mercedes to run on alternative fuel.



## Want Fries With That? Arthur Brown's Mercedes Fills Up at KFC

By SHANTAY IOSIA

(Sept. 22, 2004) If you think your car has you chained to the fuel pumps, think again. Just ask Metro's Arthur Brown, who fills up his 1983 Mercedes at the back entrance to KFC, for free.

Brown, a scheduling systems analyst, purchased the car about three months ago hoping to beat rising gasoline prices by converting its fuel system.

His turbo diesel engine now runs on waste vegetable oil (WVO), which he collects monthly from a local Kentucky Fried Chicken store. KFC filters the WVO first, then he filters it again to remove any remaining particles, and it's ready to burn.

Brown had no ecological intentions when he began the project. His incentive was to save money and rekindle an abandoned hobby.

### 'Simple technology'

"Once cars got to be sophisticated with all the computers and different things, I quit working on them," Brown says. "This is going back to the simple technology which I can handle."

PHOTOS: SHANTAY IOSIA

After extensive research, Brown found that older model cars proved to be the most reliable and the diesel Mercedes was the best option for the fueling experiment because of its durability.



Brown installed a second fuel tank in his trunk to store the vegetable oil. Hoses connect it to the engine.

It's not unusual for a diesel engine to reach half a million miles, but although they are more fuel-efficient than gasoline engines, most Americans find them bulky and noisy.

With the Internet as his guide, Brown downloaded directions and installed a second fuel tank in his trunk to store the vegetable oil. The 12-gallon tank sits where his spare tire once did with hoses connecting it to the engine.

When Brown turns the key, ignition starts with the diesel fuel. The engine's hot coolant heats the vegetable oil to about 170 degrees Fahrenheit. This liquefies the gelled substance to a viscosity, or thickness, that is friendly to the engine.

### Lights identify the fuel

After the vegetable oil is heated, a switch shifts the fuel source allowing the car to run on WVO. Colored lights on the dashboard identify the type of fuel the car is using.

The engine is switched back to diesel before the vehicle is shut off to prevent clogged injectors and filters. Brown says the converted fuel system cost less than \$500.

"I get the same mileage as the diesel fuel," says Brown, who commutes almost 70 miles from Moreno Valley. "It even sounds a little better. It doesn't have the diesel high-clicking sound."

Although vegetable oil is said to be friendlier to the environment than petroleum, the EPA has not yet recognized it as an energy source. Furthermore, there are no substantial studies to show what the emission contains and its long-term effects.

For now, Brown is confident that the fuel is harmless to his engine and to the environment. "It almost smells like French fries," he says.


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## Division 9 Transportation is Tops in July's 'How You Doin' Contest

By SHANTAY IOSIA

(Sept. 23, 2004) San Gabriel Valley Division 9 Transportation maintains its consistency in service with July's "How You Doin'?" Award for Outstanding Transportation Division. It is the division's third award since December.

The division ranked second in the following: in-service on-time performance, running hot, accidents per 100,000 miles and new Worker's Compensation claims.

"We are bringing better quality service to the San Gabriel Valley Sector and that reflects on MTA overall," says Larry Cosner, assistant transportation manager.

Cosner says the recognition is a result of the division's attempts to get every employee involved. Every first Wednesday of the month management holds a "Rap Session. Employees are able to ask management questions and get feedback about their performance.

The managers also meet with the operators daily and ride the lines with them.

"Our goals are to always improve," Cosner says. "All of our efforts are being received well by the operators. They are paying attention to what we are saying and they are caring about the division."

Cosner also says there is no separation between management and employees at Division 9. "We are not a division, we're a team. Team 9, that's who we are."



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## Guide Dog 'Shadow' Finds her Way at Metro

UPDATE (Sept. 23, 2004) – Meet Shadow, a 2-year-old black Labrador guide dog who's getting to know Metro and winning hearts in the process as she guides her master through the labyrinth of escalators, elevators, plazas and cubicles.

When programmer analyst Agustin Moreno announced last month that his faithful guide dog Liza was retiring, it was like losing a member of the Metro family. ([See full story](#))

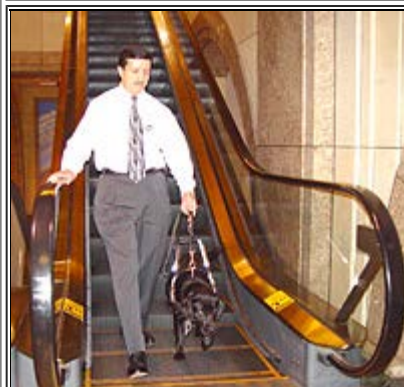
All around, it's a happy ending and a new beginning for Moreno, Liza and Shadow.

Although Liza is 12 and a half years old now - about 74 in dog years - retirement didn't sit too well with her, Moreno says. "She got a little depressed staying home, and didn't seem to understand how I was getting around without her."

So, before Moreno arrived home from a two-week stay at the Guide Dogs of America training school in Sylmar, Liza was reunited with her original trainer, Meri Foreman, a Guide Dogs of America executive who raised Liza as a puppy and maintained a relationship with her during the 11 years she spent at Moreno's side.

"I miss her," says Moreno, "But she is happy, and, without having to wear the harness, she is ready and able to receive as much love as people want to give her." – from Gayle Anderson.

**Photos:** Top: Shadow has her own employee badge. Middle: Agustin Moreno and Shadow navigate the office. Bottom: Escalators are negotiable. *A friendly reminder:* It's hard to resist the urge to pet the lovable lab, but guide dog etiquette requires a polite refrain when the dog is on the job.



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Rail~Volution drew 1,000 participants from around the nation to the Metro-hosted event in Los Angeles.



DAVE SOTERO PHOTO

## Rail~Volution Spotlights LA's Efforts to Reshape Around Transit

- Congressman says nation has 'stake' in L.A.'s success
- FTA Administrator says households near transit to double

BY DAVE SOTERO

(Sept. 23, 2004) Los Angeles was home to the 10th Annual Rail~Volution conference, this week, as 1,000 attendees from around the country convened in Hollywood to see first-hand how dramatically the region is redesigning its urban landscape around transit.

The conference, hosted by Metro, featured a full program over five days, including press conferences, weekend tours, opening reception, 60-plus conference sessions, exhibits and evening events.

Rail~Volution, founded by Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Oregon), is considered a premier industry gathering for addressing urban issues that arise in communities served by public transportation.

Opening Rail~Volution's plenary session on Monday, CEO Roger Snoble set the stage for why Los Angeles was selected as the city for a national discussion on urban livability issues.

## 'LA is reinventing itself'

"Los Angeles is reinventing itself as a place where it is possible to enjoy a

JOHN WEISKOPF PHOTO



Congressman Earl Blumenauer of Oregon, founder of Rail~Volution, speaks at a plenary session.

greater quality of life by living, working and playing in urban communities connecting directly with modern, efficient public transit.” Snoble said.

Blumenauer said the Los Angeles region’s efforts to deal with population density, changing demographics, traffic congestion and economic uncertainties will prove critical for the rest of the country. “Everybody in America has a stake in the success of your efforts here.”

FTA Administrator Jennifer Dorn, speaking at Tuesday’s session, said demand for compact housing near transit is likely to more than double by 2025.

Dorn cited a new study conducted for the FTA by the Center for Transit-Oriented Development, which found that across the U.S. more than 14.6 million households are likely to rent and buy housing near transit by 2025 – double the number that live in these neighborhoods today.

DAVE SOTERO PHOTO



Rail-Volution included 20 “mobile workshop” tours like this one which stopped at the Metro Red Line’s Hollywood/Highland station.

### Second only to New York

Demand in Los Angeles, due to its sheer size, is expected to be second only to New York, she said.

Development activity is occurring along many corridors of the Metro system, including downtown Los Angeles, Chinatown, Long Beach, North Hollywood, Lincoln Heights, Hollywood and Pasadena.

Conference attendees were surprised by the amount of development activity now taking place.

Metro coordinated 20 “mobile workshop” tours that gave attendees a look at transit-oriented developments and other urban centers in East Los Angeles, Santa Monica, Hollywood, Pasadena, Fullerton, Brea, Claremont and Long Beach. Many tours were filled to capacity.


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## California High Court Won't Review Decision on Orange Line EIR

(Sept. 24, 2004) The California Supreme Court has refused to review a Court of Appeal decision that invalidated the Metro Orange Line environmental impact report (EIR).

But in a decision handed down, Thursday, the high court also refused to grant a request by a local opposition group – COST – to halt construction work on the San Fernando Valley transitway.

The issue will now be sent back to the Superior Court for possible further action. COST has indicated it will ask that court for an injunction to again stop construction.

The Court of Appeal earlier held up construction for 23 days in August in a dispute over whether the Metro Orange Line EIR should have included a study of the Metro Rapid system as a possible alternative to the 14-mile dedicated bus route.

## Study to cost \$650,000

Since the Court of Appeal order, Metro has begun a study of Metro Rapid. The study is expected to cost \$650,000 and require at least two more months to complete.

Metro Rapid was not considered as an alternative, earlier, because it was still an unproven pilot project at the time the EIR was being written.

Since neither the Supreme Court nor the Court of Appeal provided specific direction to the Superior Court, Metro's County Counsel Steve Carnevale wrote in a memo to the Board of Directors that the Superior Court "will have considerable discretion when it considers the matter." Construction on the \$330 million Metro Orange Line, which was halted Aug. 2, resumed Aug. 26.


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## Metro's DEOD to Host National Contract Compliance Conference

(Sept. 24, 2004) Metro's Diversity and Economic Opportunity Department (DEOD) will host some 300 colleagues from around the country, Oct. 5 – 10, at a national meeting of the American Contract Compliance Association.

ACCA, whose members are public sector contract compliance, affirmative action and equal employment opportunity officers, is meeting in Los Angeles for the first time in its 18-year history.

Franklin Willis of Metro's DEOD will chair the event at the Wilshire Grand Hotel. Carolyn Peoples, assistant secretary of U.S. Housing and Urban Development, will be the featured speaker.

Metro presenters at the conference will include DEOD Deputy Executive Officer Linda Wright, Manager Tashai Smith, Manager Lucille Coleman, Senior Representative Jay Fiskus, Representative Bud Boyd and ADA Compliance Administrator Chip Hazen.

ACCA promotes contract compliance practices, procedures and legislation nationwide. It is the first organization in the U.S. to offer a professional certification in compliance administration.

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JOHN WEISKOPF PHOTO

CEO Roger Snoble announces \$4 billion in transit-inspired developments at recent press conference.

## Board Unanimously Extends Snoble's Contract One Year

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 24, 2004) The Board of Directors voted unanimously, Thursday, to extend CEO Roger Snoble's four-year contract for a fifth year. His contract will now expire Sept. 30, 2006.

The Board's action came a full year before the CEO's initial contract would have expired. Snoble, 59, joined Metro on Oct. 1, 2001, succeeding CEO Julian Burke. He had previously served as president/executive director of the Dallas Area Rapid Transit District (DART).

"The Board's action is a strong vote of confidence in Roger's leadership," said Chairman Frank Roberts. "In his three years as CEO of MTA, we have opened a major new rail line, added new Metro Rapid lines in our busiest transit corridors and brought hundreds of new high-tech buses into the Metro fleet."

"We look forward to another two years of progress as MTA begins construction of a new rail line in East Los Angeles, opens a new transitway in the San Fernando Valley and continues to expand our transit system and improve customer service and transportation alternatives throughout Los Angeles County," he added.

### Major safety campaign

In addition to the accomplishments cited by Roberts, Snoble also initiated a major employee safety campaign – Safety's First – and spearheaded a reorganization of Metro Operations that created five bus service sectors and a rail sector led by general managers who are directly responsible for their operation.

"I feel really good about the last three years," Snoble said late Thursday. "Our team has come together and worked hard. We've accomplished a lot. We now have a couple of years to do even more



good."

Noting that transit executives from other properties have recently complimented the service and cleanliness of the Metro fleet, Snoble said, "We need to keep that going, keep working at the goals we've established to provide quality bus and rail service."

"The Board's action today really helps us accelerate projects that were put on hold for a while," he said. "There's an awful lot of work that has to be done to increase people's mobility."

### **Thanked Metro employees**

The CEO also thanked Metro employees for their hard work. "The staff's been wonderful, all 10,000 of them," he said. "They responded in a very professional way. The Board's action today reflects on their hard work."

Snoble's career in public transportation spans 39 years. Prior to joining DART he served as president and general manager of the San Diego Transit Corporation, where he worked for 20 years, rising in the ranks from planning and scheduling manager to the top executive post. Snoble began his transportation career in 1965 as a planner for the TriCounty Regional Planning Commission in Akron. He also worked as a planner for Akron Metro Transit District from 1971-1973.

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## Metro Approves Issuing Up to \$1.3 Billion In Proposition "C" Bonds for Key Transportation Projects

- Action Allows Agency to Meet Air Quality Requirements, Protect Federal Funding

By ED SCANNELL

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority Board of Directors today took a bold step to meet federal air quality conformity requirements, relieve congestion and ensure the future flow of federal transportation funding by approving the sale of up to \$1.3 billion in Proposition C bonds over 10 years (FY 05 – FY 14) to accelerate the schedules of five key transportation projects.

"The outlook for state and federal transportation funding in the near term is not encouraging and requires that we act decisively if we're to meet our air quality goals and tackle this county's traffic congestion," said Frank Roberts, Lancaster Mayor and MTA Board Chair. "Getting these projects to the finish line will come with a cost, but a far less cost than the federal funding, air quality and mobility we otherwise would lose."

Today's action allows Metro to advance the list of projects already committed in the Los Angeles County Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and amend the program to include \$1.3 billion in funding for the following projects:

### **I-5 Carpool Lane from Route 134 to Route 170, \$254.2 million –**

The project is currently estimated to cost \$300 million. The remaining \$46.1 million for project design is expected to be funded with Proposition C, State Transportation Improvement Program and federal funds. Projected completion of the project is April 2010.

Between 185,000 and 250,000 cars and trucks use this segment of I-5 every day. Accelerating this project by four years from 2015 to 2011 will save motorists time. In fact, an estimated 640,000 hours in annual travel time savings will be realized in 2025 from this project alone.

**Exposition Light Rail Project to Culver City, \$240.9 million –** This project is being advanced from FY 2013 to FY 2010. While the first priority remains funding this project using federal and state funds, a locally funded alternative is being introduced to expedite construction and ensure compliance with air quality standards.

### **I-5 Carpool Lanes from Route 91 to Route 605, \$541.4 million –**

This project is now estimated to cost \$610 million. This is an increase of \$232 million due to escalating costs of steel, concrete and real estate acquisitions.

Between 175,000 and 235,000 use this segment of I-5 every day. Accelerating this project will save motorists an estimated 1.6 million

hours in travel time in 2025.

**Alameda Corridor East (ACE), \$85 million** – This \$912 million project will make improvements to 70 route miles of track along the freight main lines in the San Gabriel Valley between East Los Angeles and Pomona to accommodate the increase in train traffic resulting from the completion of the Alameda Corridor project.

Phase I of the ACE project includes safety improvements and 10 grade separations. Phase II includes 10 grade separations and a traffic signalization system. Today's action will advance Metro's Phase II share to Phase I and complete Metro's funding obligation for the project.

**Deferred Call for Projects, \$192.7 million** – The Deferred Call for Projects totals \$192.7 million and includes \$118.5 million in non-Caltrans projects and an estimated \$74.2 million for the I-5/Route 14 Direct Connector Project. Today's action funds the balance of deferred non-Caltrans and I-5 Route 14 Direct Connector projects.

"The Texas Transportation Institute's 2004 Urban Mobility Study may have crowned the Los Angeles region the king of congestion for the 18<sup>th</sup> year in a row, but it also made it clear that as a result of our transportation plans and programs we're the nation's only large region to have reduced roadway congestion since 1990," said Roger Snoble, Metro chief executive officer. "The projects funded by today's Board action will allow us to make an even larger dent in our congestion and improve the region's quality of life."

The I-5 carpool lane project (Route 134 to Route 170) was one of six major Los Angeles County projects in the Draft 2004 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) that the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) identified as "delayed" when compared to their schedules in the 2004 Regional Transportation Plan.

SCAG noted that if projects were not implemented in a timely manner, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) might delay or deny the adoption of the RTIP, thereby cutting off federal funds, permits or environmental clearances for "non-exempt" transportation projects.

The schedule delays for the remaining five projects from the SCAG list were addressed by prior Metro Board actions that committed funds and cooperation by Metro and Caltrans to implement the projects, which include bus rapid transit (BRT) projects on Wilshire Boulevard, Crenshaw Boulevard and a north-south route in the San Fernando Valley.

"It's a pleasure to be able to work with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority on keeping transportation solutions to our regional congestion problems moving forward in these tight fiscal times," said Doug Failing, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), District 7 Director.

Metro's commitment of \$1.3 million in planned borrowing would be conditional and Proposition 25% bond proceeds would be provided only as last resort when cash flow needs cannot be met with state and federal funds.

Metro has capacity to issue the total bond amount without exceeding

its debt policy. In addition, it anticipates that this borrowing would result in a negligible increase (0.5 percent) in Metro's total debt during the 10-year period as the result of the scheduled retirement of existing debt during that period.

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PHOTO CREDIT: LT. MIKE PARKER

## 'Tagger Task Force' Makes 63 Arrests in 3 Early-Morning Raids

(Sept. 28, 2004) A three-week-long investigation by a combined law enforcement task force resulted, last week, in 63 arrests for graffiti vandalism – much of it targeted at Metro vehicles and property.

Coordinated by Lt. Pat Jordan of the Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau, the deputies, along with Metro Security officers, LAPD and County Probation officers made early-morning raids on 172 homes in an effort to catch suspects before they left for school or work.

The "Tagger Task Force" raids, which took place on Sept. 2, Sept. 16 and Sept. 23, netted 11 arrests for vandalism, 16 for drug possession, four for firearms violations, 21 for probation violations and 10 for outstanding warrants.

"Targeting vandals is part of an on-going effort by the Transit Services Bureau to help Metro bring graffiti vandalism under control," said Lt. Mike Parker. In FY 2004, Metro spent \$7.8 million dollars cleaning up graffiti damage systemwide.

"The same individuals who are tagging buses and trains and bus stops, are also tagging freeway overpasses in communities and neighborhoods throughout Los Angeles," Capt. Dan Finkelstein, Metro police chief, told the media.

Sheriff's deputies prepare for an early-morning raid on the homes of graffiti vandal suspects. From left are Deputy Henri Sayegh, Sgt. Mike Estrada, and deputies Brad Jerzykowski, Victor Locklin, Eric Jaime and Darin Martin.



Sheriff's Deputy Dave Certvantes directs his firearms detection dog, Kona, in a search for illegal weapons at a suspect's home.




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## 500 Metro Operations Employees to be Feted at "Night of Stars"

(Sept. 28, 2004) Some 500 Metro Operations employees will be honored for their achievement during "A Night of Stars," Friday, at the Pacific Palms Conference Resort & Hotel in the City of Industry.

Transportation and maintenance employees who have met the award criteria during the past five years have been invited to attend the gala event. Each will receive a medallion and a lapel pin.

To qualify, honorees must have had no disciplinary action, no lost work-time injuries and no more than 30 days of absences. Transportation employees could have zero preventable traffic accidents.

Seven "Spotlight" winners also will be announced from among 27 nominees during the evening. Nominated by the five Service Sectors, Metro Rail and the Regional Rebuild Center, the Spotlight winners will take home commemorative plaques.

Entertainment during the "Night of Stars" will be provide by Master of Ceremonies Darrell Carter, a Venice Division 6 bus operator and professional comedian. Recording artist Delbi, who has sung backup for Barbara Streisand, Celine Dion and others, will lead karaoke singing.

Participants and their guests also will have an opportunity to win prizes by guessing the number of chocolate stars in a Plexiglas bus, by matching baby photos to management faces and in a putting contest.

"A Night of Stars" will be hosted this year by the San Gabriel Valley Service Sector. Board Chairman Frank Roberts, Los Angeles City Councilman Martin Ludlow and Deputy CEO John Catoe will be featured speakers.



[Click here to see who will be honored during](#)

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Construction Chief Rick  
Thorpe

### [Meet Rick Thorpe](#)

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## Construction Chief Rick Thorpe Looks At Metro Rail's Realities

- Only one major project on the drawing board
- Plans to 'streamline the organization'

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 28, 2004) Metro Construction is experiencing a sea change. A new way of doing things prompted by two realities: there is only one major transit project – the Exposition Line – on the drawing boards, and the department has a new executive officer who has fresh ideas about how things should be done.

As he looks ahead at the next five or ten years, Construction Chief Rick Thorpe – who joined Metro following a stint as CEO of the Pasadena Blue Line Construction Authority – sees only the Eastside Extension and the Expo Line as near-future construction certainties.

Following the groundbreaking in July, work really is just now beginning on the Eastside Extension, a \$898-million project due to open in 2009. The Exposition Light Rail Project, which will reach from downtown LA to Culver City, is the next priority but most likely will not start construction until at least 2006.

The \$330 million Metro Orange Line, now remobilizing after a 23-day, court-ordered shutdown, is due for completion in the second half of 2005. The proposed extension of the Metro Gold Line to Claremont isn't funded and would be built by an independent construction authority.

### 'Long way from turning dirt'

"Beyond that is the Crenshaw BRT and the downtown connector, both unfunded," he says. "There are other things in the planning stage, but they're a long way from turning dirt."

So as Thorpe, 55, views the future, he sees the need to structure a

department that is flexible, adaptable and willing to do things differently. And is smaller than it is now.

One of his goals for FY 2005 is to "streamline the organization so it matches the work that's coming and, unfortunately, there are fewer and fewer projects."

That means a reduction in force this fiscal year for the 104-member staff of engineers, construction managers, administrative staff and for a support staff that includes auditors, contract managers, public affairs and others.

The Eastside Extension project can support only 25 to 30 employees and the Expo Line "is funded at a level that perhaps will sustain five to ten people," Thorpe says. "The numbers right now don't add up."

### **Prefers to build teams**

Thorpe also is reorienting Metro Construction from what has been a "matrix" organization with "pools" of engineers and others who work on projects only when they are needed. He prefers to build teams whose members are assigned to a project from start to finish.

"I believe you need to have people who are dedicated to a project so they're fully involved," he says. "In my opinion, you don't get that deep-rooted commitment to getting a project done when you're only assigned to it occasionally."

Thorpe notes that CEO Roger Snoble supports his approach, but he acknowledges that it will take time for some Metro Construction employees to make the shift.

"I still see out there a tendency by our staff to want to go back and do things the old way, because that's the way they were taught," he says. "It's going to be important as we go through this transition that we wind up with people who are willing to think out of the box and adjust to a new way of doing things."

At the same time, Thorpe praises the Metro Construction staff. "They're great. We have a lot of talented people. It's a matter of how we utilize those people and their willingness to do things differently."


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## Thorpe Sees Innovative Ways to Build Metro Rail Projects

(Sept. 28, 2004) Construction Chief Rick Thorpe is moving away from Metro's former "design-bid-build" method of construction, which was used to build the Metro Red Line.

He's even looking beyond the "design-build" method – a construction technique that established his reputation with rail construction projects in Salt Lake City and as CEO of the Pasadena Blue Line Construction Authority.

The design-build construction method also is now in place on the Eastside Extension and on the Metro Orange Line project.

This method calls for the contractor to both design and build the project. The project owner is responsible for ensuring safety and quality and for making sure the contractor delivers what was promised.

### Innovative approach

For the Exposition Light Rail Line, which will connect downtown LA with Culver City, Thorpe is considering a more innovative approach to rail construction.

Under this plan, a team that includes the final contractor will complete the project's preliminary and final engineering. Then, based on the approved design, the project owner and the contractor each will estimate the cost of the project and negotiate the final contract.

"The advantage," says Thorpe, "is that you don't ask the contractor for a cost until all the detailed design is done. The contractor knows exactly how much material he'll need and what his costs are."

And that's an improvement over design-build, which he says doesn't necessarily result in the lowest cost for the project owner. Case in point: the \$898 million Eastside Extension project came in \$113 million over Metro's projected costs.

But Thorpe says design-build does provide the owner with known costs early in the project and results in much faster delivery.

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