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Citizens' Advisory Council Board Wowed by New AnsaldoBreda Rail Cars

- The 2550 rail car may go in service next spring
- Will be tested on Metro Gold, Blue and Green Lines

By JIMMY STROUP

(Dec. 7, 2005) It was just a ride from Union Station to the maintenance yard and back, but it was long enough for members of the Citizens' Advisory Council to be greatly impressed with the new AnsaldoBreda 2550 light rail car.

"This thing's quiet," said Council Member Wally Shidler, a regular rider of the Metro Blue Line. "This is really quiet." The first of the new cars may be in service as early as next spring.

The Italian-made AnsaldoBreda car is the first of 50 Metro plans to add to its fleet over a three-year period. The cars cost \$2.72 million each.

Since receiving the first unit, Metro has been testing the car on a section of the Metro Gold Line near the 210 freeway.

"We've completed the bulk of the testing that we need to do on the Gold Line," said Dave Kubicek, deputy executive officer, Rail Operations Fleet Services. "Part of the commissioning process is that we're also going to run the car on the Green Line and the Blue Line."

No costly modifications

Testing on all three Metro light rail lines is required because, unlike previous models, the 2550 was designed to be used on any of the lines without costly modifications.

Photos: Jimmy Stroup



Members of the Citizens' Advisory Council file into the Italian-made AnsaldoBreda 2550. The 90-foot two-car light rail car is expected to finish testing soon and begin revenue runs as early as spring 2006.



Deputy Executive Officer of Railway Operations Fleet Service Dave Kubicek and Citizens' Advisory Board Council member Wally Shidler sit in two of the 76 seats on the new AnsaldoBreda 2550. With 50 of these purchased, the new light rail cars will be a

“After we work out the bugs, the car will be sent up to Pittsburg, Calif., to the AnsaldoBreda plant and adjusted to the specifications or whatever modifications have to be made,” said Duane Martin, Gold Line transportation manager.

common sight on the Gold Line and the Eastside Expansion.



The cockpit of the new AnsaldoBreda 2550 provides improved design meant to aid operator comfort and functionality.

After that, Martin said, the remaining trains yet to be built in Italy as part of the order will incorporate the changes.

Sleeker than the Siemens P-2000s that currently run on the Gold Line, the 2550s are bullet-like in design. Their shiny silver façade doesn't hurt that comparison, either.

Burnished silver

The metallic décor continues into the interior, where the railing and seat mounts are all the same burnished silver as the outside skin. Rugged black rubber flooring also complements the futuristic metallic theme.

Just when the interior seems to look more like an operating room than a train, the pattern of the seat material rules that out. With swirling bright reds, blues, greens, yellow, purples and oranges, it looks like it's having more fun than any seat ought to be allowed.

As more of the 2550s appear on the Gold Line, Kubicek said some of the P-2000s will move to the Green and Blue Lines to increase their fleet sizes.

With 40 due to run on the Gold Line and 10 more on the Eastside Expansion, the AnsaldoBreda 2550 is sure to become a common sight for East Los Angeles Metro rail riders.