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Limited Stop Service Begins on Metro Gold Line, Feb. 13

- New service to shave five minutes off Gold Line commute
- Only 3 stops between Union Station and Sierra Madre Villa

By DAVE SOTERO

(Jan. 20, 2006) Beginning Feb. 13, Metro will launch a limited stop service on the Metro Gold Line that will shorten end-to-end rush-hour travel times from 34 minutes to just 29 minutes, a 15 percent time savings for weekday commuters.

The new service, the first of its kind on the 73-mile Metro Rail System, will stop at only five of the 13 Gold Line stations: Union Station, Highland Park, Mission, Del Mar and Sierra Madre Villa. Station stops were chosen based on their volume of passenger boardings.

The weekday-only limited stop service will consist of six trains operating every half hour in both directions during the morning and afternoon rush hour periods.

"The new trend at Metro is faster service," said Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. "With the addition of limited stop service providing increased time savings, the Metro Gold Line gives LA commuters another good reason to use public transit."

Southbound trains from Sierra Madre Villa to Union Station will run every half hour from 6:05 a.m. to 8:35 a.m. and again from 3:50 p.m. to 6:20 p.m. The arrival of limited stop trains at Union Station has been timed to ensure that passengers can make their connections with the Metro Red Line.

Coordinated with Red Line

Northbound from Union Station to Sierra Madre Villa, trains are currently scheduled to run every half hour from 5:35 a.m. to 8:05 a.m. and again from 3:50 p.m. to 6:20 p.m. These times also are coordinated with the Red Line to help passengers make their Gold Line connections at Union Station.

Limited stop trains will supplement Metro's existing peak-hour train service. Those trains will continue to run every 15 minutes during these times. No additional fares will be required to use the new service.

"I anticipate riderships on the Metro Gold Line will be even stronger when commuters discover they can now get between Pasadena and Downtown LA in under half an hour," said CEO Roger Snoble, noting that the introduction of two new Express Lines, 15 Metro Rapid lines and the Metro Orange Line were "achieving substantial transit time reductions across the county."

Metro will take a number of steps to help patrons identify limited stop

trains and station stops.

Trains will be designated by "Limited Stop" headsigns on both ends of the trains and on the sides. Large placards also will be mounted on the dashboards of the limited stop trains to announce the names of the stations where each train will stop.

Customer ambassadors

Banners will be placed at all stations to advertise the limited stop service and take-one pamphlets in three languages and in Braille will be distributed to patrons. Customer ambassadors will be posted at Gold Line stations before and after service begins to answer patrons' questions and to assist with boarding. Sheriff's deputies and fare inspectors also will be trained to provide information.

"I think end-to-end commuters are really going to appreciate the new limited stop service," said Gold Line Transportation Manager Duane Martin. "Knowing the train will make only three intermediate stops with fewer announcements will mean a more relaxing ride."

In preparation for the introduction of limited stop service, some modifications – like painting yellow safety strips along platform edges – were required at Gold Line stations. The safety strips will remind patrons at the by-passed stations to keep away from the platform edge when the limited stop trains go through.

Operational training for Gold Line operators, supervisors and controllers has begun. Most training is being accomplished during off-peak hours, at night and on weekends. Some operating rules and procedures are being modified to comply with state rail regulations and to ensure passenger safety.

"My hat's off to the Rail Operations and Maintenance teams, to Marketing, Community Relations, Safety and the Transit Services Bureau," said Metro Rail General Manager Gerald Francis. "They worked together closely and with LADOT and the CPUC to get this job done."