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LA Marathon Preparation a 3-Month Effort for Metro's BOC

(March 14, 2006) The 21st Los Angeles Marathon, coming up this Sunday, may be a one-day event for participants, but it's a three-month effort for members of Bus Operations Control.

Some 50 Metro Bus lines, along with a number of municipal bus lines, will either be detoured or divided to make way for the March 19 event. Every operating division, except those in the Valley and Venice Division 6, will be affected by the Marathon schedule.

In preparation for the annual event, the Special Projects Team from Bus Operations Control will post signs in English and Spanish at some 900 affected bus stops four days in advance to alert passengers to the temporary changes.

The signs will include a Marathon route map and the nearest alternative boarding location for each bus line that normally services a stop. The signs must be in place by this Friday, and will be removed on Sunday as streets reopen.

More than 100,000 Service Change Notices have been distributed through the bus and rail divisions, the Customer Service Centers, the Downtown Business District and Marathon organizers. Even LAPD and city Traffic Control officers have been given detour information to help them answer questions from the public during the event.

Brochures will be available on buses, and some 50 transportation operations supervisors and four field equipment technicians will be assigned to aid passengers and bus operators during the running of the 26.2-mile Marathon.

Streets will be closing around 3 or 4 a.m. on March 19, according to John Escher, who heads the BOC Special Projects Team. Streets will be reopened by 5 p.m., depending on the weather.

Slower when hot

"On a cold day, the run goes quickly," he says. "On a hot day, it runs much slower and the streets open later."

Each operating division whose buses serve the Marathon area already has received a large map of the route and copies of appropriate detours. The materials were to be posted on division bulletin boards, along with changes to operators' regular assignments. Each division also will have an instructor on duty the morning of the Marathon to assist operators as they sign on.

Since the Marathon is a closed course, most east-west buses will detour to the 10 Freeway. They will leave the freeway to make the appropriate stops.

Metro Report:

For the second year, Marathon sponsors have chartered two Metro buses for athletes want to participate in both the Acura Bike Tour, which starts first, and the Marathon. The buses will transport those bikers from the Bike Tour finish line to the Marathon starting line.

The Los Angeles Fire Department also plans to position two Metro buses near the Marathon finish line to shelter participants who may need medical assistance or just want a cool, dry place to recuperate following the race.

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