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**Bring it on!** Runners pack Metro Rail trains en route to Universal City starting line. To carry those participants, 15 six-car trains operated on six-minute headways between 5:45 a.m. and 7:30 a.m.



Photos by Carolyn Flowers

## Metro Planners Succeed in Adapting Service to New Marathon Route

- 80 bus lines detoured; Red Line carries thousands

By NED RACINE

(March 6, 2007) Metro scored a victory at Sunday's 2007 Los Angeles Marathon, without having to carry a sports bottle.

Because of the Marathon's snaking route from Universal City to Flower and Fifth streets, the 2007 marathon affected Metro's bus routes more than any marathon before. Eighty bus lines were detoured and the Metro Red Line carried thousands of racers and spectators.

"Operationally, from the rail side, everything went probably better than we could have expected, not fully knowing what we were really getting into," said Bruce Shelburne, Rail Division Transportation manager, who noted the Red Line suffered no major delays during the morning or mid-day periods.

Of the 80 detoured bus routes, only two turnaround routes had to be changed Sunday morning. "I'll take that . . . out of 80 detours," laughed Steve Rank, Assistant Operations Control manager, Bus Operations Control.

"People were very appreciative of services and our presence," added Shelburne, who currently estimates that the Red Line carried 60 to 65 percent of Marathon participants, between 15,000 and 16,000 riders.



**On the mark:** Marathoners arrive at Universal City Station.

**15 six-car trains**

To carry those participants, 15 six-car trains operated on six-minute headways between 5:45 a.m. and 7:30 a.m. The trains ran with 10-minute headways between 9:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. It was the largest deployment of Metro Red Line train cars – 90 of 104 – in the line’s history.

The Metro Blue Line operated three-car trains with 12-minute headways between the Long Beach and 7th and Metro stations and six-minute headways between the Imperial/Wilmington and 7th and Metro stations. The Metro Gold Line also ran more trains during the morning hours.



**On the job:** Rail Division Transportation Manager Duane Martin and crew prepare for early

morning rush of runners.

"I can't say enough good things about [the Customer Information staff] helping people," Shelburne said. "It was a lot of one-on-one contact for the day." Employees providing customer information services included representatives from Customer Information, various bus and rail operations departments, Planning and Safety.

"What sticks in my mind—traveling around the system and looking at some of the locations—was the customer service agents . . . latching onto a person, helping them out, making sure they knew where to go. If there was any confusion, that customer service agent would physically take them where they needed to go to board a bus or train," he said.

Rank echoes Shelburne's praise. "I think the most important thing was having the Customer Information staff out there, answering the questions one at a time, face to face. That was absolutely critical."



**Metro Fit:** Ride to the starting line; run back.

### **A challenge for the RRC**

Customer information agents, revenue collection staff, Division Ambassadors, Metro Security officers and Metro volunteers staffed an information table at the Los Angeles Convention Center on Friday and Saturday and helped marathon participants register for the race. Besides selling day passes, the Metro staff and volunteers passed out transit maps, answered questions and provided guidance on riding Metro to the starting line on Sunday.

Rank noted that a particular challenge for the Regional Rebuild Center (RCC), mechanics, was a request from Marathon organizers 48 hours before the event began.

They asked Metro to pick up wheelchair racers at their downtown hotel, transport them and their daily wheelchairs, their racing wheelchairs and their attendants to the starting line.

Beginning Friday morning, RRC mechanics removed all the seats from eight buses and installed wheelchair fasteners. The buses were ready by 4 a.m. Sunday, in time to be driven by transportation operations supervisors and bus operators assigned to Operations Central Instruction.

As for lessons learned, Rank would like to see better coordination among the bus divisions, Bus Operations Control and field supervisors to ensure better bus operator relief during next year's event. He echoes Shelburne's thoughts that more Customer Information staff – approximately 40 worked on Sunday – would be required if the Marathon used the same route again.

"They like hauling people," Shelburne said of the train operators' enthusiasm for their Marathon tasks and for carrying 800 or 900 riders per train. "They know everyone is counting on them."

"All the planning paid off," Rank said.

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