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## Metro Laces Up Its Running Shoes

### • BOC Preps Bus Routes to Wind Around New Course

By Michael D. White  
*Staff Writer*

(March 18, 2010) This Sunday morning, the starting gun will sound and the annual Los Angeles Marathon will begin, again.

Boasting a record 25,000 runners from around the world, the point-to-point race route traverses the grueling 26.2-mile route from Dodger Stadium to the Santa Monica Pier, winding its way through four cities – Los Angeles, Santa Monica, Beverly Hills and West Hollywood.

The marathon is considered one of the top running events in the country and entails months of coordination on the part of event organizers who handle everything from organizing emergency medical services, to stockpiling the water bottles given to participants.

"It's quite a challenge," says Metro Assistant Operations Control Manager Stephen Rank. "Several months out, the Marathon



Steve Rank, asst. Operations control manager, is mapping out the bus scheduling plan for the annual Los Angeles Marathon, Metro's largest planned service disruption.

organizers get together with us [Metro] and all of the other agencies and entities involved to start mapping out the overall plan."

According to Rank, who's coordinates Metro's efforts, the yearly event is the largest "planned service disruption" the agency experiences every year, but this year's "Stadium to the Sea" race is particularly challenging because of a new route that requires Metro to temporarily reroute more than 45 bus lines in nine Metro divisions.

"There's a template of sorts that we ordinarily work with for the event, but the new race route required us to work with a larger number of government agencies than we have in the past," he said.

"Each of the four cities impacted by the race has its own police, fire and transportation departments and, this year, the federal government also played a role because part of the race is being run on U.S. Government-owned property, namely the Veterans Administration complex in West Los Angeles."

### **Tasks and Targets**

Taking his cues from a "Task and Target Date" sheet, Rank keeps tabs on the progress of every job that needs to be accomplished to achieve the goal of accommodating the Marathon's organizers and, at the same time, maintain an acceptable level of service for Metro riders who rely on the agency to provide them with timely service.

"We have target dates for getting the appropriate information to our Transit Operations Supervisors well in advance of the event," said Rank, adding that regular service on some Metro bus routes will be restored as the race progresses.

Full service on all the affected lines, however, isn't expected to resume until an hour or so after the last runners complete the course.

That "appropriate information" involves coordinating the multi-dimensional work of several Metro departments and includes, among a myriad of tasks both large and small, producing and distributing revised route maps, determining operator and support personnel assignments, organizing internal and external communications, submitting car pool vouchers, designating street closures and turn-around streets, positioning tow trucks, getting the word out to the public through the Metro website, posters, flyers, and making sure there's a sufficient supply of radios and charged batteries.

"There's a lot of work involved, but everyone at Metro who's involved in the Los Angeles Marathon project pitches-in on top of doing their regular work. We don't create a 'team' because we don't have to," said Rank, who's been involved on the annual event for the past nine years.

"It's a challenge, but I have to say I really enjoy working on it."