



NEWS

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MTA AIMS FOR CLEAN SWEEP AT 18,000 BUS STOPS

The MTA today deployed another work crew as part of an ambitious project called the Bus Stop Cleaning Program to clean the 18,000 stops in L.A. County serviced by its buses.

"Historically, upkeep of bus stops has not been MTA's responsibility, but we believe our customers deserve a clean and pleasant environment where they make their bus connections," said MTA Interim CEO Linda Bohlinger. "This is an important addition to our pledge of improved service for the transit riding public."

The crew of six will take to the streets five days per week to work on bus stops where the need is greatest. They'll pull up weeds, remove trash, clean sidewalks, and even remove graffiti on adjacent buildings with the permission of building owners. They'll tackle bus stops on streets including Van Nuys Boulevard, Slauson Avenue, Broadway, Valley Boulevard, Venice Boulevard, Vermont Avenue and Florence Avenue.

"Bus stops shouldn't be an eyesore, whether they're the shelter type, a bus bench, or just a pole and a sign," said MTA Board Chairman Larry Zarian. "I believe the Bus Stop Cleaning Program will generate more pride in the communities Metro buses serve. Our customers need to feel safe and comfortable while waiting at our clean stops. We think this is an excellent investment."

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Two additional crews will be phased into the program in the coming weeks, bringing the total number of crews to four. As part of MTA's Mediation and Restitution Services program, the crews will be drawn from a pool of adult court-referred community service workers provided by judges from around L.A. County.

"The crews will be deployed on a needs-based schedule. They'll also have the flexibility to respond quickly when an urgent situation arises," said Ellen G. Levine, MTA Executive Officer, Transit Operations. "Some bus stops may require little or no cleanup. Others may need attention as often as once a month. Our goal is to keep the stops clean year round."

Realizing the job may require a helping hand, MTA hopes to partner with churches, businesses, community groups and municipalities in another element of the program dubbed "Adopt A Stop." Adopted bus stops will bear a sign indicating who is taking responsibility for their appearance. Among the first to adopt a bus stop is Ramon Aceveta who owns Super Mercado El Tigre, a food store at Avalon Boulevard and Vernon Avenue.

"Groups unable to perform cleanup chores can still adopt a stop by helping to pay for the cleanup," said Levine. "And in some instances MTA's cleanup crews may assist partners with their own cleanup projects in exchange for some attention to needy stops. "

"Bus stops shouldn't be a haven for urban blight," added MTA Board Chairman Zarian. "When the Bus Stop Cleaning Program gets into full swing we hope to make the bus stop near you a bright spot in the neighborhood."

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The Bus Stop Cleaning Program dovetails with two other MTA cleanup programs. MTA's Zero Tolerance Program is now in effect at all MTA operating divisions. It combines efforts to clean and replace vandalized equipment, to establish a community outreach program, and to cooperate with law enforcement agencies and the courts with the assignment of juvenile offenders to graffiti cleanup crews.

Another MTA success story is the Vandalism Abatement Program. The goal of 175 men and women bus operators, mechanics, maintenance assistants and support personnel from the Division Advisory Committees (DAC) from 10 of the MTA's operating bus divisions is to enlist the public's support for a safe and clean transportation system. Approximately 3,000 hours of volunteer time are donated to the MTA annually by DAC members at graffiti mitigation events.

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