



# NEWS

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## MTA BOARD APPROVES VARIETY OF EAST LOS ANGELES CALL FOR PROJECTS TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PLANS

A plan to spruce up portions of two major East Los Angeles streets so residents will feel more comfortable walking to a Metro Red Line subway station and be more inclined to utilize other forms of mass transit, was one of 20 Call for Projects proposals the MTA Board approved last week and which will benefit the area.

Tabbed the Pico Aliso Pedestrian Linkage (PAPL), the amenity-adorned 1-mile expanse will begin at the Pico-Aliso Housing Project, where nearly 3,000 people reside, wind down First Street and finally to Mariachi Plaza, First Street and Boyle Avenue, the future home of a Metro Red Line station.

"The \$1.2 million award will create a pedestrian-friendly environment in which transit-dependent people can walk safely to the proposed Mariachi Plaza or to Metro Bus transit stops," said Interim MTA CEO Linda Bohlinger. "It also will make the area more inviting for visitors, including tourists," she added.

Enhancements to the streetscape will range from improved lighting, landscaping, including trees, additional signage and handicap curb ramps to sheltered bus stops with benches, monuments and murals.

"This project will definitely enhance the neighborhood and be a beautiful backdrop to the Metro Red Line station, which will open in the year 2004," said Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina. "Our communities deserve improved access to transit and the street improvements this will provide."

The MTA's Call for Projects program occurs once every two years and determines which of the hundreds of transportation improvement project

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proposals submitted by 88 cities, Los Angeles County and state agencies receive funding. This particular Call for Projects saw 414 proposals vie for approximately \$666.3 million. In all, 157 projects were approved following a four-month evaluation and ranking period involving MTA and the Board.

Paralleling the 110 Freeway and the Arroyo Seco Flood Control Channel and connecting with the under-construction Los Angeles Bikeway set to open in June 1997 is the Arroyo Seco Bikeway (ASB), another approved East Los Angeles Call for Projects proposal. The ASB, which received a \$1.4 million award, will cross the Los Angeles River over a new bicycle bridge and proceed through Chinatown and end at Union Station.

Meanwhile, the City of Los Angeles will receive \$703,000 to purchase four 30-foot long, natural gas engine DASH buses for deployment in El Sereno.

"This new service will provide vital links between residential areas, parks, employer centers, schools and senior centers," said Los Angeles City Councilmember Richard Alattore. "The project also will provide first-time service to Wilson High School, fast becoming a focal point for many social/health services for the area. In addition, it will improve transfers and service access to the entire MTA system."

Since the program's inception in 1991, the MTA has allocated over \$1.4 billion for such projects as freeway carpool lanes, major street widening, freeway ramps, traffic signal synchronization, bus system improvements, including bus lanes, ridesharing incentives, transit centers and park-n-ride lots and regional bikeways. Funds are also available for televillages, a new concept where local residents use mass transit to reach a transit station featuring computers which access the Internet and other equipment that make it possible to

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telecommunicate to work.

A little more than 50 percent of the funding comes from monies raised from Proposition C (the Los Angeles one-half cent sales tax), the balance from the state and federal government.

To be eligible, a public entity generally must provide transportation services such as build street and highways or operate a public transit system.

Criteria used in evaluating applications include determining regional significance and project benefit, cost effectiveness (and local funding match), land use and environmental compatibility, project need, project readiness, and benefits to the overall transit system.

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