



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MTA LAUNCHES FOUR-WEEK RADIO AND NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING BLITZ TO PROMOTE METRO BUS SERVICE EXPANSION BENEFITING L.A. COUNTY'S TRANSIT DEPENDENT

MTA has launched a four-week radio and newspaper advertising campaign to promote new Metro Bus service aimed at getting L.A. County's transit dependent riders to jobs, schools and health centers.

Through March 9 MTA will air radio ads on nearly two dozen English and Spanish-speaking stations in the greater Los Angeles area announcing service startups and expansions on 12 Metro Bus lines. In addition, ads promoting the new service will appear in several daily and weekly newspapers.

The service additions and expansions make up Phase 1 of the Metro Bus Pilot Project Master Plan as outlined in the Consent Decree of 1996 in which MTA agreed to provide new and expanded service including at least 50 buses during peak hours.

"This new bus service will improve Angelenos' access to their jobs, schools, grocery stores and medical facilities," said Los Angeles Mayor and MTA Board Chairman Richard J. Riordan. "The ad campaign ensures that our most transit-dependent customers know about the new bus service."

The master plan was developed as the result of a series of community meetings sponsored by MTA and the Bus Riders Union (BRU) which were held between June and September 1997.

More...

Page 2 Ad Campaign/Bus Service

During the meetings, more frequent service, as well as an increase in the span of operation of existing service, was advocated by members of the public. The MTA Board considered the master plan in October 1997 and in November approved implementation of Phase I.

In addition to the schedule of radio and newspaper ads, MTA is promoting the new services through the use of exterior ads on 300 Metro buses and interior ads on all Metro buses, as well as through the distribution of thousands of brochures. The brochures are available at offices of the Department of Motor Vehicles, libraries, senior citizen centers, MTA customer service centers and 31 Metro Bus pass outlets.

Introduction of the Phase I service additions and expansions began on December 14, 1997, with the exception of Line 604 (operated by LADOT) which began service in June 1997.

The Board has directed planners to return in Spring 1998 with a proposal for Phase II which will include recommendations for service expansion on additional lines for which operators are being sought through a competitive solicitation. At a minimum, the board has directed that Phase II include the startup of a new limited stop bus service (Line 305) to connect South Central Los Angeles with the Westside.

Promotional fares will be offered for the first month on each of the new services. Passengers also can obtain information on the service changes and promotional fares by calling 1-800-COMMUTE.

Service on the 12 lines in Phase I is divided among five carriers including MTA, Laidlaw/Charterway, ATE/Ryder, LADOT and Transportation Concepts.

More...

Page 3 Ad Campaign/Bus Service

Phase I Additions and Service Expansions

The Phase I additions and service expansions include:

Line 218 – On February 15, 1998, this new line began using small buses to connect Studio City and West Hollywood via Laurel Canyon Boulevard. The line is operated by Transportation Concepts under contract with MTA. Free fare will be effective from February 15 through March 15, 1998.

Line 422 – On February 16, 1998, reverse commuter service was inaugurated on Line 422, a new LADOT Commuter Express line serving downtown Los Angeles, the San Fernando Valley and Thousand Oaks. Service operates every 20 minutes during weekday rush hours from Los Angeles to the Valley with stops along the Hollywood and 101 Freeways, continuing through Van Nuys, Reseda and Warner Center to Thousand Oaks. During afternoon rush hours, service is reversed from Thousand Oaks to Los Angeles serving the same destinations. Free fare will be effective from February 16 through March 13, 1998.

Line 601 (Pico-Union/Echo Park DASH) – On February 16, 1998, this new City of Los Angeles DASH community shuttle began operating between the Echo Park/Westlake area and downtown Los Angeles. The primary streets served by the line include Echo Park Avenue, Union Avenue, and Washington Boulevard with connections to the Metro Blue Line at the Grand Avenue Station and the Metro Red Line at the Westlake Station. Free fare will be effective from February 16 through March 15, 1998.

Line 108 (Slauson Avenue) – On December 14, 1997, MTA extended its operation of Line 108 to the Citadel Shopping Center in the City of Commerce.

More...

Page 4 Ad Campaign/Bus Service

Line 602 (El Sereno/City Terrace DASH) – On December 22, 1997, this new City of Los Angeles DASH route began serving the community of El Sereno, providing connections to East Los Angeles on the south, while also serving City Terrace, El Sereno Junior High School, Wilson High School and Huntington Drive on the west.

Line 104 – Weekend service will be added and the line will be extended to the Garment District in downtown Los Angeles on the line's western end. In addition, weekday service will be enhanced to operate every 30 minutes. Convenient transfer connections will be provided in La Mirada between this line and Line 128 whose service will be extended to Fullerton Park-n-Ride in Orange County. The line operates through the City of Commerce, Montebello, Pico Rivera, Whittier and La Mirada. The line is operated by Laidlaw/Charterway under contract to MTA. The start date for these service additions will be in Spring 1998. A limited free fare is being offered to passengers who board the line along the new segment. Details are available by calling 1-800-COMMUTE.

Line 167 – Buses on Line 167, which operates from the Chatsworth Transportation Center to Studio City via Cal State Northridge and Kaiser Hospital, will run every 30 minutes instead of every hour, and in Panorama City the line will be rerouted via Chase Street and Van Nuys Boulevard to Roscoe Boulevard. The line is operated by Laidlaw/Charterway under contract to MTA. The start date for these service additions will be in Spring 1998. A limited free fare is being offered to passengers who board the line along the new segment. Details are available by calling 1-800-COMMUTE.

More...

Page 5 Ad Campaign/Bus Service

Line 205 – Beginning January 25, 1998, Line 205, which links San Pedro to Willowbrook was rerouted to provide a direct connection to the Artesia Harbor Transitway Station and to improve the range of transit options including transfers to lines 130, 444, and 445. Weekday service will be enhanced to operate every 20 minutes during peak hours with 40 minute headways during off peak hours and on weekends. The line is operated by ATE/Ryder under contract to MTA. A limited free fare is being offered to passengers who board the line along the new segment. Details are available by calling 1(800)-COMMUTE.

Line 550 (West Hollywood/San Pedro Express) – On February 1, 1998 MTA began this new express service which connects San Pedro and the harbor area with West Hollywood. Line 550 operates via the Harbor Transitway to just south of USC and then via Exposition Boulevard, Western Avenue, Venice Boulevard and San Vicente Boulevard to West Hollywood.

Line 550 provides direct links to several hospitals including San Pedro Peninsula Hospital, Kaiser Hospital, Harbor General UCLA Hospital, and Cedars Sinai Medical Center. The line also will provide connections to the Metro Green Line at the Harbor/I-105 Station, and from several Harbor Transitway stations to their connecting east/west surface street bus lines. The line will operate seven days per week with 15-minute peak-hour service on weekdays, 30 minute service during off peak times, and 60 minute night service. Free fare will be effective on the entire route from February 1 through March 1, 1998.

More...

Page 6 Ad Campaign/Bus Service

Line 603 (Rampart/Hoover Shuttle) – Starting February 22, 1998, this new community shuttle service will use smaller-type vehicles to service the Rampart/Hoover area of Los Angeles and the Glendale Galleria, with rail connections at the Metro Blue Line Grand Station and the Metro Red Line Westlake/MacArthur Park Station. The line will be operated by Transportation Concepts under contract with MTA. Free fare will be effective from February 22 through March 22, 1998.

Line 605 – Beginning February 22, 1998, this new community shuttle service will provide service on Grande Vista Street, Lorena and Soto streets in Boyle Heights to L.A. County USC Medical Center. The line will be operated by Transportation Concepts under contract to MTA. Free fare will be effective from February 22 through March 22, 1998.

Line 604 (Vermont Avenue/Proposed Checkpoint Deviation Services) – The line began operating in June 1997 as the Vermont Shuttle. In September 1997, Line 604 was incorporated into the South Central Smart Shuttle Demonstration Project. It provides improved access to the neighborhood surrounding Vermont Avenue between Slauson Avenue and the Metro Green Line. The line is operated by LADOT.

Note to Editors: Maps of the routes are available upon request by calling Ed Scannell at (213) 922-2703.

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