



# NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## MTA URGES METRO BUS AND RAIL PATRONS TO EXPLORE OTHER TRAVEL OPTIONS IN THE EVENT OF A STRIKE

The MTA is advising patrons of its Metro Bus and Metro Rail systems to make plans for other travel alternatives in the event of a strike, which could take place as early as 12:01 a.m., Tuesday, September 5. Negotiations with three of the MTA's labor unions over the last five months have fallen short of an agreement to date. Unless a settlement or agreement to extend the negotiations is reached over the Holiday, the MTA's unions could halt bus and rail service in Los Angeles County as early as next Tuesday morning.

The MTA is prepared to activate a very limited amount of bus service in the event of a strike, but the public should not rely in any way on Metro Rail or Metro Bus service. Metro Rail and Metro Bus patrons should familiarize themselves with other travel alternatives, such as LADOT's Commuter Express, DASH bus service operated by LADOT in downtown Los Angeles, service provided by municipal and local bus operators (Santa Monica Big Blue Bus, Long Beach Transit, etc.), carpools and vanpools, and Metrolink.

Metro Rail and Metro Bus patrons also are encouraged to call 1-800-COMMUTE and select option "3" for information on ridesharing options.

Contract talks continue between the MTA and its three largest unions, the United Transportation Union (UTU), the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) and the Transportation Communications International Union (TCU), who represent over 6,700 bus drivers, train operators, mechanics and clerks.

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The MTA initiated formal talks with union leaders as early as April of this year, but no agreement was reached by the contract expiration date on June 30th. With the unions refusing the Agency's repeated offers to extend their contracts to allow for further discussions, the MTA was forced to appeal to Governor Davis to intervene and prevent an impending strike. In an effort to propel negotiations towards a peaceful resolution, the Governor invoked a 60-day "cooling off" period which is set to expire at midnight on September 4.

The MTA has made a considerable effort to resolve its labor contract issues fairly and as early as possible, to safeguard the public's interests. The Agency also proactively offered a number of reasonable contract modifications. Unfortunately, the unions rejected these proposals without further discussion.

Those proposals, if accepted, would have provided the unions with competitive wage increases, equivalent health benefits and increased scheduling flexibility for workers, while enabling the MTA to hold to its commitment of cutting operating costs and improving productivity. One proposal would give drivers a 4-day, 40-hour work week, and 3-day weekends—an increasingly popular schedule for many American workers—without cuts in base salaries, all the while saving the MTA millions of dollars each year.

"The MTA has repeatedly expressed a commitment to working collaboratively and fairly with our employee unions to avoid a crippling strike," said Julian Burke, MTA's Chief Executive Officer. "All along we've hoped we could reach fair agreements, and we still have that hope."

A strike by the unions would impact an estimated 1.5 million daily passenger trips and hit low-income commuters, seniors, the disabled, students and people without automobiles particularly hard. According to a 1998 ridership survey, 60 percent of public transportation riders make less than \$15,000 a year.

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A strike would halt all Metro Rail service on the Metro Red, Blue and Green lines, and all but a limited amount of service on five Metro Bus lines. The MTA's contingency plan calls for the operation of approximately 100 buses on only five out of the MTA's 200 Metro Bus lines:

- Line 21 (Westwood to downtown Los Angeles via Wilshire Boulevard)
- Line 30 (Pico/Rimpau to East LA City College via Pico Boulevard and E. First Street)
- Line 60 (Long Beach to downtown LA via Long Beach Boulevard, Pacific Boulevard and Santa Fe Avenue)
- Line 204 (Hollywood Boulevard to Imperial Highway via Vermont Avenue)
- Line 156/420 (Panorama City to downtown LA via Van Nuys Boulevard, Lankershim Boulevard, Santa Monica Boulevard and the 101 Fwy)

Buses on these lines would provide service about every 10 to 12 minutes from 5 AM to 7 PM every day.

In addition, 22 smaller capacity shuttle buses will emulate Metro Red Line subway service in downtown Los Angeles between Union Station and Westlake/MacArthur Park, with stops in close proximity to the five Metro Red Line stations located between these two points. The MTA estimates the shuttle buses, which will operate as Line 888, can provide seats for about 33 percent of the 8,000 patrons originating on the Metrolink commuter rail system who ride the Metro Red Line each weekday.

This shuttle route would operate every 2 to 3 minutes during rush hours and every 10 minutes during mid-days. No weekend service would be operated on this route.

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