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FUTURE WHITTIER BIKE PATH ONE OF MANY MTA HAS FUNDED

Since 1993, MTA has provided \$82 million in funding through its Call for Projects program for 108 bikeway projects totaling 200 miles of bike paths and bike lanes in Los Angeles County. This includes the 5.2-mile Whittier Greenway Trail project, which will break ground Saturday, February 9 on an abandoned railroad right-of-way.

When completed within three years, the bicycle and pedestrian path will begin in Whittier's northwest corner, near the 605 Freeway and will closely parallel Whittier Boulevard. At Painter Avenue, the trail begins to travel along Lambert Road to Mills Avenue, where the right-of-way ends. MTA provided \$8.5 million in funding for the \$12.9 million trail with the balance provided by the city of Whittier and the state.

"Bicycle paths such as the Whittier Greenway Trail play an important role in alleviating traffic congestion, improving air quality, and offering an option to people who either do not like driving or do not have access to a car," said MTA Board Chair John Fasana. "This trail will provide access to many destinations along the way including jobs, hospitals and schools and is a wise use of taxpayers' money."

"MTA needs to be planning for the mobility of our residents by offering alternatives to the automobile and even the bus," continued Fasana. "Our population is expected to grow by more than 25 percent during the next 20 years. We need to offer choices to people for getting to work or going to the store instead of driving their car. Our goal is to make cycling a viable alternative that is safe and easy."

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The Call for Projects, held every two years, is a process overseen by MTA in which 88 cities in Los Angeles County, the county government, Caltrans and MTA, itself, apply for funding for transportation improvement projects that are of regional significance.

Another \$10 million in Call for Projects funding has been provided for bike lockers and racks at Metro Rail stations, the bike station in Long Beach, bicycle education programs, and bicycle maps.

In this year's Call for Projects, MTA allocated \$32 million in funding through the year 2007 for new bikeways. MTA contributes 80 percent of the total project cost while individual cities kick in 20 percent.

"Whittier officials are to be congratulated for shepherding along this project and recommending it to the MTA Board for funding," said MTA Board Director Beatrice Proo. "The fact the Whittier Greenway Trail will meet so many people's needs with its vital links warranted the Board's decision to allocate \$8.5 million toward the acquisition of the right-of-way, design and construction."

Some of the major bike paths to be completed or built in the future are alongside major transit corridors including the planned San Fernando Valley East-West busway, Exposition Boulevard light rail project, San Fernando Road Metrolink right-of-way, as well as the Los Angeles River.

Since 1993, MTA has allocated an average of \$6.5 million each year toward bikeway projects, however, the MTA's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) calls for increasing that amount to at least \$10 million annually.

Bicyclists account for 2.4 percent of all daily trips made in Los Angeles County, or approximately 720,000 out of 30 million total daily trips. The goal of the LRTP is to increase the total number of bicycle trips in the year 2025 to 2 million, or 5 percent of total trips.

"Other goals in the bikeway program are to finance bike projects that add more miles of bike facilities and have links to public transit connections and provide facilities people feel are safe and reliable and get people to where they want to go," added Fasana.