

MTA Busway Coming to the Valley MTA Kicks off Metro Rapid Transitway Project in San Fernando Valley

- **Award of \$3.8 Million Bridge Construction Marks First Phase of Planned 14-Mile Dedicated Transitway that Extends Los Angeles' Rapid Transit Network Deeper in San Fernando Valley**

Construction has begun on the San Fernando Valley Metro Rapid Transitway Project, which will bring quicker, more efficient bus service to Valley commuters and easier access to the countywide Metro Rail system in two years.

MTA kicked off the San Fernando Valley Metro Rapid Transitway project, Jan. 17, at a construction site in Van Nuys during a media event that drew a number of local, state and federal officials.

MTA has awarded Fontana-based Brutoco Engineering & Construction Company a \$3.8 million contract for construction of a bus bridge over the Los Angeles River in the Sepulveda Basin. The contract represents the first phase of the San Fernando Valley Metro Rapid Transitway Project, a planned 14-mile landscaped transitway that will run between the North Hollywood Metro Red Line Station and Warner Center in the West Valley. The transitway, comprising 13 busway stations spaced approximately one mile apart, is scheduled to open in Spring 2005.

Under the fixed-price contract, Brutoco will build the first and largest of three bridges located along the transitway. The new, five-span bridge will be capable of spiriting high-capacity, clean-fuel Metro Rapid buses across the Los Angeles River, providing a lifeline to Valley schools, colleges and major business centers. The overall transitway project has the potential to create up to 9,500 full-time jobs in the area, according to MTA project estimates.

The project is the first of its kind in Southern California, and represents an innovative solution whereby transit buses operate on mostly exclusive guideways unimpeded by surrounding traffic.

"The San Fernando Valley Metro Rapid Transitway Project, after years of planning, is now a reality with the award of this first major contract to begin construction," said MTA Board Chairman and Los Angeles City Councilman Hal Bernson. "Once completed, the transitway will serve residents of the San Fernando Valley with a real, dedicated rapid transit system connecting Warner Center with the North Hollywood Metro Red Line Station."

Trips made between Warner Center and the North Hollywood Metro Red Line will now take about 35-40 minutes using Metro Rapid buses, compared to 50 minutes for the same trip using current on-street buses. The transitway will pass through communities

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including North Hollywood, Valley Glen, Van Nuys, Sherman Oaks, Encino, Tarzana and Woodland Hills. The transitway will link activity centers such as Pierce College, the Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area, the Van Nuys Government Center, Valley College and North Hollywood.

As part of the project, MTA plans to build bike and pedestrian paths along the route to give residents more transportation options when using the transitway. Project planners also have factored in transitway beautification into the plans, and will landscape 80 acres of the exclusive transitway, planting 7,000 trees and 900,000 drought-tolerant shrubs. Park-and-ride lots will be built at five stations, providing 3,300 new parking spaces.

“The Valley has waited a long time for this hugely important regional transportation improvement project,” said Roger Snoble, MTA CEO. “In light of the state’s current budget crisis, the need for public works projects that spur economic development and create jobs for Californians is critical. This project is ready to go. Along with the Eastside Light Rail Project to extend the Metro Gold (C) Line, the San Fernando Valley Metro Rapid Transitway Project is a top MTA priority, and we are confident that it will receive the necessary state funds to complete it.”

“The construction of the transitway is what the transit-dependent in the San Fernando Valley need. This innovative project would be like a Metro light rail system on rubber wheels that will allow riders to cut travel time by one-third,” said Board Member and Mayor of Los Angeles Jim Hahn. “The project is good for the environment and will help keep Los Angeles moving.”

The San Fernando Valley Metro Rapid Project is part of a broader MTA program to expand use of high-capacity Metro Rapid buses in 24 locations throughout Los Angeles County. This represents 356 miles of bus service in 34 cities and 11 Los Angeles unincorporated communities. Metro Rapid buses employ a signal priority system which reduces the amount of time a Metro Rapid bus is stopped by extending the length of green traffic signals and reducing the length of red traffic signals. Consequently, Metro Rapid buses reduce travel times up to 25 percent, a significant time-savings for passengers.

The Metro Rapid Transitway Project will cost \$329.5 million, with an additional \$10.9 million for a bikeway project built in parallel with the transitway.

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