



February 27, 2004

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## **Rainfall Delays Start of Wilshire Boulevard Peak-Period, Bus-Only Lane Demonstration Project till March 8**

(Los Angeles) – The start of a peak-period, bus-only lane project on Wilshire Boulevard in West Los Angeles has been delayed until March 8. Rainfall during the month of February forced the postponement of necessary pavement re-striping and installation of signage. The project, which is aimed at demonstrating the benefits of bus-only lanes to bus operations and traffic flow, had been set to begin March 1.

Curbside lanes will be reserved for buses only during weekday morning and afternoon peak hours (7 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.) on both sides of a frequently congested section of Wilshire Boulevard between Federal Avenue and the Santa Monica city line at Centinela Avenue.

The project will mark the debut of the next generation of Metro Rapid bus service, which has succeeded in reducing the travel time of its passengers by as much as 25 percent. Setting aside curbside lanes for buses only will demonstrate how much more time Metro Rapid passengers can expect to save when their buses are not competing for space with other vehicles in regular traffic lanes.

In addition to Metro Rapid buses, local service Metro buses and Line 2 buses operated by Santa Monica Big Blue Bus, a partner in the demonstration project, will also use the curbside lanes and benefit from the project.

The 13-block stretch of Wilshire Boulevard was chosen, in part, because limiting curbside lanes to buses during peak hours would not adversely impact automobiles, which currently do not operate in those lanes. In fact, Metro planners expect automobile drivers to experience a smoother and safer traffic flow because buses will operate in their own dedicated lane except when needing to pass local service buses in operation or other vehicles illegally parked in the curbside lane.

The peak-period bus-only lanes will be set off by a solid white line and by white dashed lines at approaches to intersections. Other vehicles will only be allowed to enter curbside lanes to make right turns at intersections or to turn into off-street parking lots.

Various signs, including a large overhead sign near Federal Avenue, will mark the project area and indicate restrictions to motorists. Enforcement of restrictions on parking, stopping and loading during peak periods by non-transit vehicles will be a key feature of the project. Parking will be available during off-peak periods.

The Los Angeles City Council approved the demonstration project in November 2003. MTA and Los Angeles City and County officials will closely monitor the project, which will be evaluated at the end of six months for possible future application on similarly congested streets.

**MTA-039**

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