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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Go Metro to get fit:

Metro, American Heart Association, Ketchum-Downtown YMCA Announce 'Metro Fit' Campaign to Encourage More Exercise Using Public Transit

- "Metro Fit" helps health-conscious residents lose pounds, save money and discover L.A.

During a fitness rally in downtown Los Angeles today, Metro, The American Heart Association, and the Ketchum-Downtown YMCA announced "Metro Fit," a new fitness awareness campaign that encourages health-conscious Angelenos to incorporate more exercise into their daily schedules by connecting with public transportation.

Doing so also allows people to save on gasoline prices -- currently near record highs -- and gain access to a wealth of Los Angeles destinations available via the Metro Bus and Rail system.

Ways to become "Metro Fit" include walking to and from transit for commuting, utilizing Metro subway steps, discovering local attractions on Metro and on foot and combining bicycling with public transit.

"For busy county residents, working the recommended amount of exercise into their daily routines is nearly impossible," said Roger Snoble, Metro CEO. "Let the Metro system be your own personal trainer. It's a ready-made par course to help you lose pounds, save money and discover L.A."

The detrimental effects associated with lack of daily exercise are many, including high blood pressure, stroke, diabetes, obesity and heart attack.

"Metro Fit is a natural extension of the American Heart Association's mission to reduce disability and death from cardiovascular diseases and stroke," said David Beaver, Corporate Market Director for the American Heart Association, a Metro Fit campaign partner. "Achieving at least 30 minutes of walking exercise per day utilizing public transit can help Angelenos achieve their fitness goals while at the same time reducing risk factors for disease, our nation's number one killer."

"Physical inactivity is one of the most common preventable patterns of unhealthy behavior," said Tom LaBonge, Los Angeles City Councilman and Board Member of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro). "I have my own fitness regimen, and I 'go Metro to get fit' whenever I can."

Many public health advocates recommend 10,000 steps per day to maintain physical fitness. Public transit is an excellent way to help reach that number, as it requires more walking than Angelenos typically do in a day. There is a Metro stop within a half-mile radius of most residents' homes in Los Angeles County, so those who choose to use public transportation round-trip can achieve around 2,500 steps -- the rough equivalent of one mile -- of additional daily walking exercise.

Combining bicycling with public transit is another important component of the Metro Fit campaign. Use of bicycles on the Metro system extends travel opportunities significantly, allowing people to cover more ground and increase aerobic exercise. Metro Buses include bike racks, and no permits are required to bring bikes onboard Metro trains. Some limits on bikes do apply during rush hours on certain rail lines, but there are no restrictions on weekends and holidays. Several hundred miles of bike paths are available within Los Angeles County, with more planned.

Health-conscious residents can also take the "Metro Stair Climb" utilizing Metro Red Line subway steps to increase heart rates and help improve cardiovascular health. Subway portal steps range from about 60 to 200 steps, with Wilshire/Vermont Metro Red Line Station having the most: 324 steps.

Metro Fit also encourages lunch time and weekend walking tours to discover new areas of the county, including downtown L.A., Pasadena, Hollywood, North Hollywood, Pasadena and Long Beach. Metro, for example, offers the Art's A Trip docent tour of art at Metro Rail stations. Free two-hour tours the first Saturday and Sunday of every month provide insights into station artwork and the artists who created them. Fitness enthusiasts can walk approximately 3,100 steps on this tour.

A definitive source of cultural destinations available via public transportation in L.A. County can be found at ExperienceLA.com. Here Metro Fit enthusiasts will find scores of Metro Adventures, complete with maps and Metro Trip Planner, that make discovering Los Angeles cultural destinations on foot a breeze. Neighborhood adventures are available for, among others, Chinatown (2,900 steps), NoHo Arts District (10,000 steps), and Pershing Square (4,250 steps).

The Los Angeles Conservancy, a nonprofit historic preservation organization dedicated to the revitalization of the architectural and cultural heritage of greater Los Angeles as well as other historic communities around the city, provides low-cost, two and a half-hour weekend tours of historic portions of Los Angeles, including Downtown's Evolving Skyline (2,916 steps), L.A.'s Historic Core (4,525 steps), and Union Station (5,025 steps). Self-guided tours are also available on the conservancy's web site at www.laconservancy.org.

Residents can complement their walking routines by taking public transit to the gym. The Ketchum-Downtown YMCA welcomes Metro Fit enthusiasts at its location at 401 South Hope Street, which is closest to the Pershing Square Metro Red Line Station or easily accessible via "DASH" buses. New and returning exercisers find the YMCA to be an ideal exercise destination, with a supportive staff and high quality facilities. Public transit is available at many YMCA locations throughout the Los Angeles basin.

Studies reveal that Angelenos are not getting nearly enough physical exercise on a daily basis. According a recent study by UCLA researchers, 41 percent of county residents get no more than 10 minutes of continuous exercise each week, which is lower than the 30 minutes a day, five days per week that is recommended by the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

An Atlanta survey conducted earlier this year by Georgia Tech found that how much time people spend driving has a great impact on whether they are obese. Driving time, in fact, had a greater effect on weight than gender, ethnicity, education or income. The survey found that, for every extra 30 minutes commuters drove each day, they had a three percent greater chance of being obese than their peers who drove less.

The Atlanta survey is particularly relevant to Los Angeles, where most residents spend much more than half an hour per day driving.

Public transit remains a highly attractive, cost-effective alternative to driving. Metro has found that L.A. County commuters who switch from solo driving to public transportation, carpools or vanpools save more than \$4,000 per year in commuting costs.

For more information on Metro Fit, visit metro.net/metrofit.

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