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## **Six Months Later and \$1,000 Saved, 577x Riders Love the Express Service**

Since she began commuting to work in March on the Metro 577X express bus from El Monte to the VA Medical Center in Long Beach, Christina Chau of Monterey Park has saved more than 3,000 miles of driving. "I am very happy with it," she said.

Since she began commuting to work in December on the 577X from Norwalk to Long Beach, Lucia Meraz of Pico Rivera has saved more than \$1,000 in gas costs. "I have a big Yukon," Meraz said. "To fill my car it's about \$60 a week. So I'm saving \$200 a month on gas. "

Since he began commuting to work in December on the 577X from El Monte to Long Beach, Suwit Chart of Arcadia has saved the stress he felt fighting afternoon traffic after a hard day of work. "On the way home, I have no frustration," he said.

What all three commuters have in common is that they have joined the 700 or so others commuting via Metro's newest week-day express bus from El Monte to Long Beach, with only one stop in between at the Metro Green Line Station in Norwalk. Not only is it easy and convenient, it's faster than driving.

Utilizing HOV lanes on the 605 Freeway for most of its 28-mile route, the 577X starts at the El Monte Transit Center, a major transit hub with connections to 27 other bus lines, then travels about 30 minutes non-stop to the Metro Green Line Station in Norwalk. It continues on non-stop for about 20 minutes to its two destinations in Long Beach: the VA Medical Center and nearby Cal State Long Beach. End-to-end, the 577X takes about 50 minutes, a distance that could cost a solo driver as much as 1 1/2 hours during rush hour.

Line 577X is the second service in the Metro Express bus program. It joined Metro Express Line 450X, which debuted in June, 2005. Line 450X whisks rush-hour commuters from the Artesia Transit Center in the South Bay along Harbor Freeway HOV lanes to downtown Los Angeles in 25 to 30 minutes.

Among the beauties of the express bus lines is that they travel via the HOV (car-pool) lanes, thus saving precious time. And it's not just the time, the gas and the stress-free trip. As Suwit Chart pointed out, it's reduced wear and tear on the car as well as other costs. His most recent car insurance bill, for example, dropped more than \$200, due to significantly reduced driving mileage. As an added benefit, parking at both the El Monte and Norwalk stations is free.

Line 577X buses depart weekdays every 20 minutes during the peak periods of 5 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., and every 30 minutes during off-peak times of 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. After 8 p.m., buses run every 60 minutes until 10:30 p.m. For more details and timetables go to [www.metro.net](http://www.metro.net) or call 1-800-COMMUTE.

By the end of the year Lucia Meraz will have saved more than \$2,000 on gas alone. It's enough to buy a new 42-inch plasma TV but that's not exactly what she has in mind for her savings. "Go to Vegas?" she said. It wasn't a question.

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