

Groundbreaking for 5.2-Mile Bike and Pedestrian Path

- The Whittier Greenway Trail is expected to be completed in three years and is primarily funded by MTA.

By GARY WOSK

(Feb. 12, 2002) On a sun-drenched morning on an abandoned rail right-of-way in Whittier, last Saturday, MTA Board members and community officials broke ground on a 5.2-mile bike and pedestrian path, then tossed train engineer's caps into the audience.

With walkers and bicyclists looking on, the ceremony was held in the middle of Palm Park, one of the numerous destinations to be served by the planned \$12.9 million Whittier Greenway Trail. The project is partially funded by an \$8.5 million MTA grant.

"Bike trails 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 vehicle," said MTA Board Chairman John Fasana, who – along with Director Beatrice Proo – were presented with railroad spike plaques.

"Our population is expected to rise by 25 percent in the next 20 years," he said. "We need to be offering people choices such as this Whittier Greenway Trail, in getting to work, in getting to the store, instead of taking our own vehicle."



^ Whittier Councilman Owen Newcomer, Whittier Mayor Allan Zolnekoff, MTA Board Director Beatrice Proo and MTA Board Chairman John Fasana dig into site of the future 5.2 mile Whittier Greenway Trail.



200 miles of bike paths

Since 1993, MTA has provided \$82 million in funding – an average of \$6.5 million a year – through its Call for Projects program for 108

bikeway projects totaling 200 miles of bike paths and bike lanes in Los Angeles County.

^ On abandoned rail right of way, bicyclist Bill Moore discusses future city of Whittier bike and pedestrian path with (from left) Whittier Mayor Allan Zolnekoff, MTA Board Director Beatrice Proo and MTA Board Chairman John Fasana. PHOTOS BY GARY WOSK

“The MTA wanted to support this project with \$8.5 million because it becomes a regional form of transportation,” said MTA Board Director Beatrice Proo. “We try to make each dollar go as far as possible and to service as many cities as possible, and this is one example of one that will be doing so.”

The 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. 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.

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 MTA wants to increase the total number of bicycle trips in the year 2025 to 2 million, or 5 percent of total trips.

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