

REPORT FROM THE CEO

A weekly report
from the office
of the CEO

June 20, 1994



I have both a significant achievement and a troubling development to report in our search for more transit dollars. Last week in Washington, I met with key transportation leaders in the House and Senate. On June 16, the House passed its version of the FY 1995 Transportation Appropriations Act, which includes \$165 million for Segment 3 of the Red Line. It is the largest appropriation for any transit agency in the country, representing 25% of the nation's "new start" rail funding.

But, at the same time, operating expenditures for transit properties were reduced by 13%, which means that the MTA's federal assistance was cut by \$6 million. The Senate still has to vote on the Appropriations Act. Federal law requires that it do so by September. Arthur Sohikian, who's the agency's federal liaison, Board members and I will continue our efforts to increase transit funds from Washington and oppose any reduction in operating assistance.

Public Hearing on Budget Draws About 250

The public hearing on the budget seemed to take a back seat to other headlines on Saturday. There were about 250 people in attendance. I listened intently to the concerns of about 100 people who testified on our proposed fare structure. Many said they didn't like the idea of doing away with the monthly pass. The Board will consider the proposed budget at its meeting on June 29.

Transit Police to Patrol Blue Line

MTA Transit Police will assume responsibility for security on the Blue Line starting July 1, 1994. Seventy-nine sworn officers will be added during the next fiscal year, expanding the force's size to 425 officers. The number of security guards also will be increased to 114.

Another Tunnel Breakthrough

Some rail milestones to report. This week, cameras caught the action as a giant tunneling machine broke through the Vermont tunnel linking Wilshire with Hollywood boulevards. The completion of this mining operation formally

ties together all of the Red Line Segment 2 corridors: Wilshire, Vermont, and Hollywood into one alignment. Meantime, many MTA departments are gearing up for next year's opening of the Green Line. The Green Line cars, by the way, have arrived and are being readied for operation at the Hawthorne yard.

Rail Line Planning Moves Ahead

Also, this week, the Board is expected to take three significant steps forward in planning for future rail lines in the county by approving a trio of environmental impact reports (EIRs) conducted in preparation for rail lines in the Burbank/Glendale area and the San Gabriel Valley, as well as a modified portion of Segment 3 of the Red Line project. All three of the documents reflected many years of community involvement and research to ensure that when the lines are built, the communities they serve will be fully informed.

The first EIR is a supplement to a final one conducted for the Burbank-Glendale-Los Angeles Rail Transit Project, and studied the possible effects associated with the construction of Taylor Yard, a rail vehicle storage and maintenance facility that would be built in conjunction with the proposed rail line. The second EIR looked at the Northern San Gabriel/San Bernardino Valley Rail Transit Corridor Project, in which MTA staff worked with 12 cities along the proposed east-west rail corridor. The third study is an addendum to a supplemental EIR already performed for Segment 3 of the Red Line project that takes into account changes to the Universal City station area.

Under the direction of Leila Procopio, assistant director of human resources, a Drug and Alcohol Task Force was created to devise an agency-wide drug-testing policy.

Random Testing Begins Next Winter

A new MTA alcohol and drug policy is being developed and will go into effect on January 1, 1995. The policy, which must comply with drug and alcohol testing regulations issued by the Department of Transportation and the Federal Transit Administration in February, includes provisions for random testing for safety-sensitive workers and alcohol testing by breathalyzer. The new rules also require that a medical review officer (MRO) receive and review all test results and verify the confirmed positive results.

MTA Drug and Alcohol Task Force Created

Under the direction of Leila Procopio, assistant director of human resources, a Drug and Alcohol Task Force was created to devise an agency-wide drug and alcohol-testing policy. The first meeting of the task force was in March. The group includes representatives from the Transportation, Equipment Maintenance, Facilities Maintenance, General Counsel, Employee Relations, Transit Police, Risk Management, OCPM, RCC, and Management Support Services departments. During the first meeting, the task force discussed major elements of the new rules, comparing them with those under the existing program.

History of Drug and Alcohol Testing

You may recall that the former RTD adopted a comprehensive alcohol and drug abuse policy for pre-employment candidates and employees in December, 1986. In December, 1989, the policy was revised in order to bring the agency into compliance with the federal Drug Free Workplace Act and the 1988 UMTA drug-testing rule.

Meanwhile, the former LACTC adopted its alcohol and drug abuse policy in April, 1992, which required testing for new hires, and for "reasonable cause."

"Positives" Plunge After Implementation

In fiscal year 1993, 1.0% percent of all routine drug screens at the former RTD were positive for drugs and 1.92% of employment candidates were positive from drugs — a dramatic reduction from 1986 when 20.5% of all drug screens conducted were positive for drugs.

Until the new MTA policy is implemented on January 1, 1995, MTA employees will continue to be covered by the policy of their predecessor agencies. All MTA new hires are covered under the RTD policy.

Note that random testing, as required by federal law, will apply only to those employees in "safety-sensitive" positions. There will, of course, be briefings for both non-represented and represented employees and their union representatives on the new drug and alcohol policy prior to the implementation date. We'll keep you posted.

Open Enrollment Sessions This Week

Please take the time this week and next to attend the information meetings so that you can select your and your dependents' insurance carriers. I encourage you to bring your insurance package home so that you can discuss all of the options with your family.

As a reminder, here are the dates and times of the remaining meetings:

- Thursday, June 23:
9:30 a.m. - 11 a.m.
and 1:30 p.m. - 3 p.m.
425 Bldg., Board Room
818 Bldg., Mt. Olympus Room, 4th Floor
- Thursday, June 28:
9:30 a.m. - 11 a.m.
Board Room, 425 Bldg.
Los Angeles Room, 818 Bldg.

There also will be personal question and answer sessions scheduled. They are as follows:

- On Friday, June 24:
9 - 11 a.m. and 2 - 4 p.m.
Human Resources, Conference Room 3
Second Floor, 425 Bldg.
Mt. Olympus Room, 4th Floor, 818 Bldg.
- Tuesday, June 28:
2:30 - 4:30 p.m.
Human Resources, Conference Room 3
Second Floor, 425 Bldg.
10th Floor, Los Angeles Room, 818 Bldg.
- Thursday, June 30:
9 - 11 a.m. and 2 - 4 p.m.
Human Resources, Conference Room 3
Second Floor, 425 Bldg.
5th Floor, Mariposa Room, 818 Bldg.
- Wednesday, July 6:
9 - 11 a.m. and 2 - 4 p.m.
Human Resources, Conference Room 3
Second Floor, 425 Bldg.
10th Floor, Los Angeles Room, 818 Bldg.

Remember, carriers must be selected by July 8.

Finally, the next CEO Advisory Group meeting has been scheduled for July 14. And, the first phase of employee moves has been completed. Note that all of the Procurement Department has relocated to the Central Maintenance Facility and that most of the Legal Department has been consolidated in the 818 Building. A completed moves plan will be available sometime next week.

- Franklin White

I welcome your comments and questions in response to CEO Report, which is designed to provide employees with direct communication with my office. Please contact either of my Special Assistants, Michael Gonzalez at 244-7476, or Phyllis Tucker at 244-6191. Also, employees can fax comments to 244-6014.

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Editor:	Andrea Greene
Art Director:	Anne Roubideaux
Designer:	Terry McMahon
Deputy Dir., Media Relations:	Jim Smart
Special Assistant to CEO:	Phyllis Tucker
Manager, Printing Services:	Al Moore