

REPORT FROM THE CEO

A weekly report
from the office
of the CEO

February 13, 1995



The 20-year plan has certainly been in the headlines this last week.

As you've read, our new plan, now under review by the MTA Board, envisions spending about \$65 billion on buses, trains, HOV's and other transportation programs. The likely option to be recommended calls for 300 more buses, funding construction of the East-West Valley rail line, a western extension of the Red Line to Westwood and an eastern extension to Atlantic Boulevard. In all, the Long Range Plan proposes a 295-mile rail system by 2015.

Economic Resources are Slim

There also has been much discussion in the press about how we have been forced, for economic reasons, to curtail some of our plans.

This really should come as no surprise. We've been saying for nearly two years that the economic resources simply are not there for us to be able to implement the 30-year plan that was drafted by the Los Angeles County Transportation Commission. I understand how frustrating this must be for some, especially for those who have devoted much time in their neighborhoods for transportation improvements.

I came out here to help Los Angeles develop one of the finest transportation programs in the country. Nothing pains me more than having to make the kind of recommendations that the newspapers have focused on these past few days.

Long Range Plan is not the Bible

I want to emphasize that some of the lines included in the 30-year plan may still be built in the second decade, should funding become available. The proposed plan will be reviewed every two years. The projects funded are not etched in stone. Our plan is merely a blueprint, not a bible.

The plan also will:

- Reallocate transit service in low-ridership areas to high ridership areas, to ease overcrowding. In less dense areas, we will look to alternative transit services such as SMART shuttles, subscription services, shared-ride taxis and jitneys, to make sure those who need transportation have it.
- Provide nearly 130 miles of bus lanes on surface streets.
- Provide better signal synchronization to improve speeds for buses, cars and trucks on all major thoroughfares.
- Build 220 miles of HOV lanes.
- Commit MTA resources to help build the Alameda Corridor project, which will greatly improve east-west traffic along this corridor.

MTA staff – in the event of a favorable ruling from the IRS – has been considering eight different retirement programs.

Possible Downsizing — Is it True?

You may have heard rumors about possible position reductions. Yes, it is possible. Already, we are looking at a nearly \$60 million budget deficit for this year alone. Much of it, as I have told you in an earlier CEO Report, is because farebox revenues are down, and we have been unable to implement our new fare structure.

We won't know the extent of any downsizing nor which units are involved for some time. The budget review process has just begun, and we hope to have a better idea by mid-spring of how many positions could be affected.

Any Electric Car Takers?

Interested in driving an electric car to work? The MTA is looking for employees who would like to use an electric car to commute between home and the Chatsworth or Sylmar Metrolink Stations for a certain period of time at no cost to the employee.

It's all part of a joint demonstration project with the Department of Water and Power, Los Angeles Department of Transportation, U.S. Electricar Company, and the South Coast Air Quality Management District. The program, coordinated at our end by Multi-Modal Project Manager Eck Chaiboonma, is called the Electric Vehicle Station Car Program (EVSP) and is scheduled to begin in the next couple of months.

The project, according to Chaiboonma, will gather data for the first EVSP in the Los Angeles area. The electric vehicles will serve as a door-to-door service for select commuting employees from home to the Metro station. They will ride Metrolink to Downtown's Union Station where the Red Line or buses will take them to their offices.

Initially only MTA, DWP, or LADOT employees will use the vehicles. Later, the program may be expanded to other commuters. We estimate that on a five mile trip with a cold start, a 1987 car would emit almost 15 grams of hydrocarbons; on a 20-mile trip, still easily within range of electric vehicles, that rises to more than 20 grams. The comparable emissions performance of electric vehicles is zero, according to the technical experts.

An electric charging station for the car will be available at the stations. Information on the performance of the vehicle, travel mileage, driver's satisfaction, and other related information will be collected from participants and reported to AQMD. If you'd like to be considered for the demonstration project, call Eck Chaiboonma at 4-6495 or Mark Dierking at 4-7174.

Division 3 Displays Mural

Division 3 in Cypress Park is sporting a bright north exterior wall now, thanks to the artistic talents of Los Angeles artist Margaret Garcia-De La Paz.

The nationally-known artist, who has been featured in a number of publications, undertook the mural as part of the MTA's anti-graffiti effort. Her work is entitled "Puro Cypress," and portrays the Cypress Park community, its transportation and houses, and flowers native to the region. It was painted with the assistance of local youths. I hope Division 3 employees are especially proud! The anti-graffiti message has always been especially strong among staff in that division.

Social Security Update

As you recall, a year ago I committed to retain a law firm to take a fresh look at the social security issue with the IRS. That firm, Covington and Burling, has been in continuing contact with the IRS during the last year.

A possible solution has been offered by the IRS which requires a detailed actuarial analysis before we can proceed. This option would involve the retroactive placement of all MTA employees into a multi-employer general retirement plan, such as PERS or LACERA. Moving to this kind of plan would require Board and employee approval. We are asking A. Foster Higgins to do the required cost analysis. Rest assured we are also investigating all possible solutions.

Cost-Effective and Fair Solution

Our priorities in developing the MTA's pension benefits, in addition to determining what is the most cost-effective solution, include ensuring that all employees are treated as fairly as possible, under the circumstances.

The administrative staff plans to schedule meetings with employees to keep everyone informed as we make further progress on this issue.

-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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