

REPORT OFFICE

A weekly report
from the office
of the CEO

September 11, 1995



The agency voted last week to support legislation authorizing a one-time transfer to Los Angeles County of \$50 million to assist the county with its financial shortfall.

The Board action also mandated that such a transfer would not affect MTA bus service or schedules. In addition, the Board stipulated the funds would be transferred with "no strings attached," indicating that the funds would not need to be returned to the MTA. Finally, the resolution called upon Governor Wilson and the state legislature not to consider any other proposals that would transfer MTA funds.

The Board's motion also called for changes in state law that would allow MTA:

- to use transportation development act funds for non-transit purposes;
- turnkey authority for construction;
- authority to negotiate certain contracts rather than use the low bid;
- to have fewer restrictions on joint development projects;
- to have fewer restrictions on the use of bicycle safety funds;
- to receive rail safety fines generated on its property to be used to improve rail safety programs.

In addition, the motion called for the elimination of California Transportation Commission oversight of MTA operations in the area of seismic safety.

Transfer Will Hurt

The \$50 million transfer is not surplus money. It is money already committed to transportation projects in the region. So, the transfer will absolutely have an impact on our ability to reach our goals. If the transfer will hurt, why do it. In August, the Senate and Assembly approved a bill which would have transferred up to \$300 million to the county. We were spared, as you know, only by the governor's veto. The debate on how much to transfer still rages. As painful as it is, the MTA took this action to reduce the risk that a higher amount might be transferred, causing even greater impacts on our program.

Rail Photo Enforcement Campaign

In other news, the MTA has launched an aggressive rail grade safety improvement program. Beginning at 5 a.m.

Monday, Sept. 11, the MTA activated automatic cameras at the Compton Blvd., Myrrh St. and Alondra Blvd. crossings of the Blue Line to photograph violators, who will be cited by local municipal courts and fined \$104.

The installation of cameras follows a successful demonstration program conducted last year. Cameras placed at three intersections along the Blue Line were credited with reducing violations as much as 92 percent.

The \$2 million project employs a high-resolution camera which takes two pictures, one when a car is starting to cross the tracks and another when the violation is completed. The photos allow clear identification of the car's license plate and the driver's face.

Imprinted on each photo is the exact date, time, location and speed of the violating vehicle. The photo also records the length of time the warning lights were flashing before the driver proceeded into the intersection and triggered the camera.

Since the Blue Line opened in 1990, illegal left turns in front of the train and driving around lowered gates have resulted in over 240 collisions with cars. Photo enforcement will be expanded to 17 crossings along the Blue Line by the end of 1995.

Gateway Move Update

We're almost there! The first employees from the 425 Building move into the new building in the next couple of weeks. Some items to note:

- The cafeteria will not be serving full meals the first week, only sandwiches and cokes.
- Union Station vendors will set up carts outside the building.
- Employees moving during the month of September will be able to park for free in the facility's garage. Later, fees will be imposed when a parking policy is finalized.
- If you are currently using a 286 or 386 computer, you will get a new computer in your Gateway work space. If you have a 486, your computer will move with you.

Board chairman
Larry Zarian
has made very clear
the value he
attaches to being
prompt and open.

Headquarters Move — Is it Worth it?

Some of you are still probably wondering if it's a better deal for us to own than to continue to lease our facility. We just finished revisiting that analysis in preparation of the Gateway opening.

We found that for a public agency, the comparison of purchasing versus leasing clearly falls on the side of ownership where terms of 15 years or more are used. Since we expect that the MTA will be in the downtown area for the next foreseeable 30 plus years, leasing loses its value after the first 15 years.

Even the recent low leases do not represent a long term advantage to the MTA. Lower materials and construction costs have accompanied lower leases, and lower existing building costs, reducing lease issues, purchasing and construction costs. Some public agencies' abilities to issue long term, low interest tax exempt bonds combined with a significant reduction in property tax expense dramatically reduced the annual facilities costs. This cost reduction combined with the expectation of long term occupancy clearly favors owning an MTA facility.

This fiscal year the agency would incur approximately \$7.6 million in total lease payments had it decided not to move to the new headquarters building. The financing of the construction of a new headquarters building will result in savings of approximately \$36.3 million over a 30-year period.

It is important to note that none of the monies used for the construction of the headquarters building are operating funds.

Moving Day Options

All staff locating to the Gateway Building must indicate on a form distributed last week what option they wish to participate in on the first day of the move. These options include:

- Taking the move day off as a flex day upon supervisor approval;
- Taking time off with pay (TOWP);
- Taking time off without pay;
- Vacation

Or

- As part of the work day, participating in training courses on the new telephone and voice mail system, new computer software and building accessibility and automation. The training is designed as a skill enhancement for our employees and will be scheduled on a space-available basis. Employees will be allowed to occupy their new work station when the move is completed.

You must tell your move coordinator which of the above options work for you. Please fill out the form which was given to you!

Human Resource Schedule Changes

Here's a reminder you should note. Human Resources at the 425 Building will be closed on Friday, Sept. 29 because staff will be relocating to the Gateway Building. Be aware, too, that the transportation pass/I.D. badge unit of the department will be closed on Sept. 27 and 28, as well as

Oct. 4 and 5.

Beginning the week of Oct. 9, the schedule will be as follows:

Photos will be taken Wednesday and Thursday 9 a.m. - noon, and 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. You may pick up passes Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Business will be conducted in the Human Resources Department on the 4th floor of the Gateway Building.

Operations Planning and Gateway Bus Service

Operations Planning staff has been busy preparing for the implementation of bus service to and from the new Gateway Transit Plaza due to open in mid-October. The group, under the direction of Gary Spivack assisted by senior Operations Planner Scott Page, has also been coordinating with LADOT, Foothill Transit and Orange County Transit for potential changes in routes to serve the Plaza.

A total of 11 MTA lines, OCTA Line 701, and LADOT Metrolink connection buses and DASH will serve the facility on opening day. Operations Planning and Marketing staff are both working on a brochure describing transportation options available at the Gateway Plaza. Ops Planning staff will be located on the 7th floor of the new facility.

Green Line Update

Last Tuesday was the first day we charged full fare on the Green Line. Ridership is more or less as initially predicted: last Tuesday, 8,000-plus rode the Line; on Wednesday, about 9,600 people took Green Line trips, and on Thursday, boardings were up over 10,000.

Open House

Operations' Eastern Regional Manager Tony Chavira is holding an open house on Sept. 23 from noon to 6 p.m. at the El Monte operating facility. All employees and community members are invited.

Performance Evaluations Due on Sept. 15

Employee performance evaluations are due on Sept. 15. If you are a manager and have that responsibility, please do so as quickly as possible.

Open, Honest, and Efficient Communications

Finally, Board chairman Larry Zarian has made very clear the value he attaches to being prompt and open. If a media relations staffer comes to your department seeking project documents, please make them available quickly. We must increase our responsiveness.

—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 my Special Assistant, Phyllis Tucker, at 244-6191. Also, employees can fax comments to 244-6014.

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