

## CAPITOL HILL VIEWPOINT

# Metro Rail Is Worth the Cost Even to a Fiscal Conservative

By REP. DAVID DREIER



*Editor's Note: The following editorial was written by Rep. David Dreier (R-Claremont), and was published in the June 10, 1984 issue of the Los Angeles Times. We are reprinting it for the benefit of our readers.*

**T**he Los Angeles area faces a dangerous transportation crisis in the next decade, and after 10 years of studies, debates and more studies, it is truer than ever that Metro Rail is our best—and perhaps only—hope for averting that crisis.

As a member of Congress who is generally described as a fiscal conservative, I'm challenged about my role as a Metro Rail supporter. "So, how can you call yourself a fiscal conservative," my colleagues ask, "and support a massive public transportation project like Metro Rail?" Others tell me that "true" fiscal conservatives "must" oppose the project.

Hogwash, I say. The fact is that at first I did oppose Metro Rail. I argued that the government could not afford to pick up the tab for a multi-billion-dollar public works project. But then came the nickel-a-gallon gasoline tax increase passed by Congress in late 1982.

*(Continued on Page 2)*

# Metro Rail Is Worth the Cost

FEDERAL TRANSIT COMMITMENTS		
1971—1981		
REGION	POPULATION	AMOUNT
Washington, D.C.	3.0 million	\$4.9 billion
Miami	1.6 million	1.0 billion
Atlanta	1.1 million	1.1 billion
Baltimore	1.5 million	1.0 billion
Buffalo	1.0 million	0.4 billion
Portland	1.0 million	0.2 billion
Totals	9.2 million	\$8.6 billion
<b>Los Angeles</b>	<b>9.5 million</b>	<b>\$0.3 billion</b>

(Continued from front page)

That tax, which I opposed, brought billions of dollars into the Highway Trust Fund, a portion of which was earmarked for building new rail rapid transit systems.

Building these systems won't add to the deficit; they will be built with the money rolling into the coffers of the Highway Trust Fund. The point is, they *will* be built because the funds can't be spent for anything else.

But why should a system be built in Los Angeles? For one, a subway in the Wilshire corridor is desperately needed: 190,000 passengers ride buses down Wilshire Blvd. each day. That's equal to the ridership of the entire 71-mile Bay Area Rapid Transit system in San Francisco. In the next 6 years, an additional 20 million square feet of office space is scheduled for construction in downtown Los Angeles, bringing with it another 120,000 workers who must commute each day in and out of downtown.

As anyone who has driven along Wilshire knows, more buses can't help. They run bumper-to-bumper as it is. Moreover, because of the nature of the corridor and the lack of existing rail lines and rights-of-way, a less expensive light rail system cannot be feasibly built.

But Metro Rail isn't just for downtown Los Angeles. It is the core of a 150-mile rail network that will cover the entire metropolitan area. Those less expensive light rail lines—such as the one being built between Long Beach and Union Station—will feed into Metro Rail, helping to alleviate freeway and surface street congestion throughout the L.A. Basin. However, they won't be built without Metro Rail.

Furthermore, the Metro Rail project calls for 62% federal financing, with the remaining 38% coming from state and local funding commitments, including Proposition A funds. No other proposed rail line even comes close to such a large local funding contribution. In fact, prior to 1982, the government regularly funded at least 80% of new rail projects. Currently, it funds 75% of them.

Part of Metro Rail's local funding comes from the private sector, and it's this private-sector commitment to the project that makes it truly extraordinary. After all, how many times does the business community lobby to increase its own taxes? The

Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce did precisely that when the Legislature passed benefit assessment district legislation in 1983.

By supporting these districts, the Chamber in effect asked to have a share of the project cost passed on to the business community in the form of higher taxes. What's more, in order to do so, it had to take on its parent organization, the California Chamber of Commerce, which opposed the legislation.

(In conversations I have had with members of the House Appropriations Committee, I've been told that this unprecedented private-sector underwriting of Metro Rail was a key factor in the strong funding support the Committee has given Metro Rail over the last two years.)

What the heavy ridership base, strong local funding commitments and private sector support all add up to is a high degree of cost-effectiveness. In fact, I believe Metro Rail is *the* most cost-effective system proposed in the country. And the Urban Mass Transportation Administration agrees; it recently gave Metro Rail very high marks for cost-effectiveness. (See related article on page 3.) It is the agency that oversees all federally funded mass transit projects in the country, and consistently has called Metro Rail one of the best rapid transit proposals now pending.

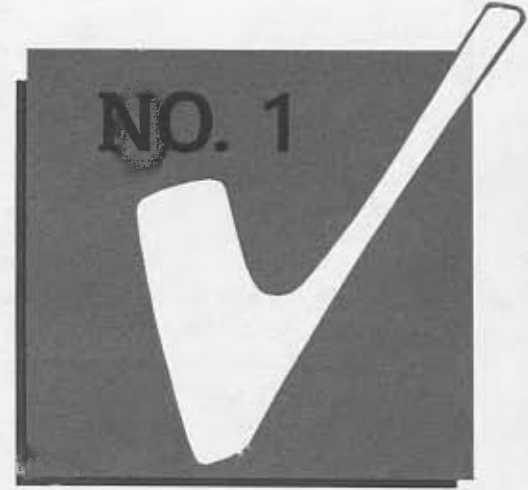
My answer to detractors of Metro Rail is a simple one: This project is the best use of Highway Trust Fund dollars in the country. Make no mistake about it, those funds will be spent; the question is where. This isn't a case of Los Angeles chauvinism or the ubiquitous federal pork barrel. Since these funds will be spent for public transportation, we ought to make the best use of them. The place to do it is right here in Los Angeles.

## LOS ANGELES COUNTY RAIL TRANSIT NETWORK



This map illustrates the major transit corridors comprising the 150-mile countywide rail network. It was approved by the voters of Los Angeles County in 1980. The 18-mile Metro Rail subway and the 22-mile L.A. -to-Long Beach light rail line represent the initial 40-mile segment of this regional transit system.

# METRO RAIL: Nation's No. 1 New Rail Project



*Project gets top marks in federal evaluation*

If the federal Urban Mass Transportation Administration could issue Olympic medals for the most cost-effective rail projects, RTD Metro Rail would be on-track for the "gold." As part of the agency's policy for major capital investments in new fixed-guideway systems, UMTA ranked the RTD Metro Rail Project the nation's No. 1 cost-effective new rail project.

Of all the mass transit capital improvement projects evaluated by UMTA (including bus programs), Metro Rail earned a sterling evaluation, ranking No. 2.

UMTA Administrator Ralph L. Stanley noted that the policy was a rational basis to rate potential projects in order "to make sound funding decisions for new fixed guideway projects."

"It is necessary to rate the projects with these objective criteria so that the federal

government makes the most cost-effective transit investments," Stanley said.

Under the new criteria, UMTA considered 11 projects and rated the Seattle Downtown Bus Tunnel, the Los Angeles Metro Rail Project, and Houston's Northwest and Southwest Busway the most cost-effective, Stanley announced in a press statement, issued May 18.

Measurement of cost-effectiveness includes consideration of the number of estimated new riders, travel time reductions for existing riders, overall capital and operating costs, and local fiscal effort, the UMTA Administrator said.

During a recent visit to Los Angeles, U.S. Transportation Secretary Elizabeth Dole commended the Los Angeles community for its efforts to create private-sector

funding mechanisms to build Metro Rail. She specifically lauded the plan to create benefit assessment districts around Metro Rail stations.

"We are very pleased with this report because it substantiates what we have been saying all along: that the RTD Metro Rail Project is the nation's most cost-effective new rail project ready to be built," said RTD Board President Nikolas Patsouras.

"We trust that Congress, both the House and Senate, will study the report and support Los Angeles' efforts which call for the U.S. Secretary of Transportation to issue the necessary documents to enable the RTD to start construction this summer on the 18.6-mile rail project."

## Emerson, Estrada Join RTD Board

RTD's new board members Carmen A. Estrada (2nd,l) and Norman H. Emerson, take oath of office at City Hall in a ceremony May 23, 1984. RTD Secretary Helen Bolen (r) administers oath as Los Angeles City Council President Pat Russell observes. Mayor Tom Bradley's new appointees to the 11-member RTD Board were confirmed the same day by the Los Angeles City Council. Emerson and Estrada replace Veteran Board members Ruth E. Richter and George Takei. Estrada is an attorney with the local Western



Center on Law and Poverty. From 1978 to 1983, she served as Director of Employment Litigation for the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Educational Fund. Emerson, a 30-year resident of the San Fernando Valley, is Director of Public Affairs for The Voit Companies, a Woodland Hills commercial real estate development firm. Prior to joining The Voit Companies, Emerson served for four years as Manager of Planning Analysis, Public Affairs Division of the Atlantic Richfield Company, Los Angeles.

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# UMTA Awards Metro Rail \$105 Million For Pre-Construction Activities

Metro Rail's construction is yet another step closer! The Urban Mass Transportation Administration has awarded RTD a \$105-million grant for engineering, land acquisition and other pre-construction activities.

The funds represent the major portion of \$117.2 million approved by Congress in 1983 for Metro Rail. The remaining \$12.2 million in the federal Fiscal Year '84 appropriation will be awarded when UMTA provides RTD with a Letter of Intent, which virtually guarantees a federal commitment to build the subway system. The remaining funds are expected to be released for construction later this year.

The announcement of the grant, approved by President Reagan last fall, was made June 14, 1984 by UMTA officials in Washington, DC.

"This grant is a clear indication of the federal government's continuing support of rail rapid transit in the Los Angeles area," said RTD Board President Nikolas Patsaouras upon hearing the announcement.

RTD General Manager John A. Dyer said the \$105 million will be matched by state and local funds in the amount of \$65 million, which will make available a total of \$170 million in additional funding for the project.

"These monies will be used to continue engineering, acquire real estate and provide construction management service," Dyer said.

Notably, the additional funds will be used to advance design on the entire 18.6-mile alignment that links downtown Los Angeles with the San Fernando Valley, via the Wilshire Corridor, Fairfax, Hollywood and North Hollywood. Some \$46 million of the grant will be applied toward acquiring real estate.

The \$105-million award brings federal funding contributions to \$177 million for Metro Rail planning, engineering, design, real estate acquisition and other support activities.

Dyer also said that a recent action by the House Surface Transportation Committee recommended an additional \$117.2 million for Metro Rail's construction in FY'85.

"We will continue to work for Congressman Glenn Anderson's bill, H.R. 5504, which would raise the total funds available for mass transit in FY'85 authorizations from \$1.1 billion to \$1.5 billion," Dyer said.

Anderson's bill, which passed the House at press time, also would extend the authorization period an additional year through FY'87.

"Anderson's bill would increase from \$400 million to at least \$562 million the federal monies available annually for new rail start projects," Dyer added. This will provide more than enough federal funding for Metro Rail and other projects across the nation.

RTD also has begun studies to develop an alternate construction plan which would permit the District to begin work on the 18.6-mile project in increments.



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(D-California)



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(D-Los Angeles)



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(R-Glendale)



Rep. Edward Roybal  
(D-Los Angeles)



Rep. David Dreier  
(R-Claremont)

## *Bipartisan Effort*

### **Congressional Leaders Call for Metro Rail Funding**

As the federal budget process for transit projects continues on Capitol Hill, California Congressional leaders have called upon U.S. Transportation Secretary Elizabeth Dole to issue immediately the necessary federal funding documents that will enable RTD to start construction on Metro Rail.

In a letter dated May 15, 1984, Sens. Alan Cranston and Pete Wilson and Reps. Glenn Anderson, Julian Dixon, David Dreier, Carlos Moorhead and Edward Roybal noted the RTD has met every state, local and federal requirement necessary to proceed with Metro Rail's construction.

Metro Rail provides the only solution to the long-term population growth, mobility and air quality challenges facing the Los Angeles region," the letter states.

The Congressional leaders called upon Secretary Dole to issue a Letter of Intent for that portion of the Metro Rail alignment that can be funded within the currently available budget authorizations and a Letter of No Prejudice for the remainder of the project's 18-mile alignment.

# RTD Launches Station Art Program

As RTD prepares for Metro Rail's construction, a national search has begun for practicing artists to commission artwork for display in Metro Rail subway stations.

Artwork in various media such as paintings, sculptures, engravings, mobiles, murals, videos, holograms and drawings are among the types of art forms that may be used. In addition, computers, rotating art displays, stained glass, and sound-and-light displays also will be considered.

The District's Art-in-Transit program is an integral part of design for the rail line.

"The community atmosphere surrounding each subway station will strongly influence the artwork which will become a part of the transit system through this program," notes General Manager John Dyer. "We are looking for various media which will bring an individual identity to each station."

A maximum of half of 1% of the station structure cost will be allocated to the art program. Dyer said that the budget ceiling for each station will probably range between \$75,000 and \$125,000.

"The architect for each of the Metro Rail stations will make a preliminary determination of suitable locations for art, as well as types of media that are appropriate," Dyer said.

A permanent, five-member committee will be appointed to review artists' qualifications and make selections. The committee members will be selected from art and art-related fields.

"I strongly urge all practicing artists to get involved in this exciting program by writing the RTD for a Request for Interest and Qualifications," Dyer said.

Interested artists should write to **Maynard Z. Walters, Director, Office of Contracts, Procurement and Materiel, RFIQ No. 068425, SCRTD, 124 W. 4th St., Los Angeles, CA 90013.** Upon receiving the RFIQ, all responses must be submitted in accordance with the requirements on file with the Purchasing Agent at the above address on or before 4 p.m. July 2, 1984. For additional information, call Don Heida at (213) 972-6147.



## METRO RAIL GOES HOLLYWOOD!

RTD Board President Nikolas Patsouras (l), presents Mann Theatres Marketing Director Bill Hertz a copy of RTD's 30-second feature film trailer "Metro Rail Is Coming!" Theater-goers throughout Los Angeles will get a preview of future public transit in Los Angeles when they attend one of 84 Mann Theatres in the Southland over the next several weeks. This arrangement—donated at a value of about a quarter-million dollars—is a joint public service effort of the RTD Community Relations Department and Mann Theatres.



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**CLARENCE BROWN**  
Editor

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