



Inside

MTA's Regional Rebuild Center

"Promo" Fare on New Transitway

"Funday" Fare Continues

Buses—A Priority

Metro Rail Progress

Alternative Rail Technology

MTA to Give \$50 Million to Los Angeles County

Despite State Auditor's report that the MTA is not "cash rich"

Four significant events transpired over recent weeks concerning transportation funding in Los Angeles County.

MTA offers \$50 million

First, on Sept. 7 the MTA Board of Directors authorized the one-time grant of \$50 million in transportation funds to assist the county with its financial shortfall. This decision was in line with California Governor Pete Wilson's veto of a bill that would have transferred as much as \$425 million in MTA funds to the county over five years. The board also instructed MTA staff not to cut bus service, although \$20 million of the funds may be culled from its operations unit.

"The board's action was designed to let the governor know that we appreciate his support in trying to resolve Los Angeles County's budget shortfall," said the MTA's CEO, Franklin White, "but we must remember that any outlay of funds greatly impacts transportation projects for many years. We want to help the county, yet soften the blow on bus operations and rail construction."

State lawmakers upped the MTA ante

Second, in the final hours of Sept. 15, before the state legislature adjourned until early December, both the Senate and Assembly approved a plan that would take \$150 million from the MTA. The bill, written by Sen. Richard Polanco (D-Los Angeles), was one of many bills designed to provide funds for the financially-strapped county.

The parameters of the compromise include the \$50 million originally offered, plus \$100 million in loans this year from the MTA. The MTA would obtain the funds by selling bonds and transferring the proceeds to the county. Although the county would be required to pay back the money over a five-year period, the MTA would incur about \$18 million in loan costs. There is a clause in the bill that would protect bus service, taking the funds instead out of the MTA's rail programs.

County takes only the \$50 million

Third, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors had until Oct. 1 either to

M T A REVIEW

September/October 1995

Stop! You're on Candid Camera!



You can smile if you want to, but this camera is anything but innocent. Motorists who violate the law and drive around lowered crossing gates on the Metro Blue Line now have more to worry about than colliding with a 100-ton train traveling 55 miles per hour. An automatic camera will catch them in the act, and the resulting \$104 fine may just be the life-changing, perhaps even life-saving, prod they need.

The MTA activated automatic cameras on Sept. 11 at the Compton Boulevard, Myrrh Street and Alondra Boulevard crossings of the Blue Line to photograph violators, who will be cited by local municipal courts and fined for their misdeeds.

"Our priority is public safety and saving lives," said Franklin White, the MTA's CEO. "This program is only aimed at those who intend to break the law."

Photo enforcement is part of the MTA's grade crossing safety improvement program and will be expanded to 17 crossings along the Blue Line by the end of this year.

"For anyone taking the risk of driving around a lowered

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Franklin E. White

MTA Chief Executive Officer

*MTA/Los Angeles County,
continued from page 1*

approve or refuse the \$100 million loan of transportation funds. However, on Sept. 26, the county exercised its option to take the \$50 million, but not the \$100 million. At this writing, it appears that will be the eventual outcome.

It's possible the county refused the loan to avoid adding to its accumulated debt that would merely postpone difficult cuts in county services.

As to the initial \$50-million grant to the county, the MTA Board asked the state to include the following proposals to ease the financial blow. Specifically, the board called for changes in state law that would allow the MTA:

- To use Transportation Development Act funds for non-transit purposes;
- Turnkey authority for construction;
- Authority to negotiate contracts rather than being forced to accept the low bid;
- To eliminate California Transportation Commission oversight of MTA operations in the area of seismic safety;
- 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.

These changes were not included in the current legislation; however, the MTA will propose them again when the legislature reconvenes later this year.

California State Auditor's Report

A fourth significant turn of events occurred with the release of the California State Auditor's office review of the MTA's financial obligations, which was conducted to determine the MTA's financial capabilities in the wake of the legislative attempts to transfer transportation funds to the county. The review was based on a set of specific questions posed by the Joint Legislative Audit Committee of the California Legislature.

The auditors determined that, as reported in the MTA's annual budget and financial statements, and as discussed at various public meetings, the MTA's long-term outstanding debt is about \$2.9 billion and annual debt service requirements are about 19% of the MTA's operating expenses.

"We are not surprised that the auditor's findings confirm what we've said all along," said White. "We've told everyone who will listen that we're managing our debt to substantially leverage available state and federal funds and continue our rail construction program in accordance with project schedules, and we have a limited financial capability to help the County of Los Angeles.

"In short, our funds have been programmed for important transportation projects and services," White added. "We are not cash rich, as some would like to believe, and the state auditors have confirmed this." ■

(Editor's note: For Franklin White's commentary on this issue, see the Metro View column, page 3)





Metro View

By Franklin E. White, MTA CEO

Dollars and Sense

Even though the federal government has come up with a bail-out program for Los Angeles County, it appears the MTA is committed to provide the county with \$50 million.

The bill enacted in Sacramento authorizes the County Board of Supervisors to transfer up to \$50 million from the MTA. The county is also authorized to borrow an additional \$100 million interest-free, but it would be required to pay it back to the MTA over a five-year period.

The MTA would have to absorb the interest and borrowing costs for the \$100 million, which our financial advisors estimate would run to about \$18 million. In other words, if the right to the additional \$100 million is exercised by the county, the actual costs to the MTA could be \$50 million, plus \$18 million in loan costs, or as much as \$68 million.

As reported in the cover story, the county has decided — at least at this point — to take only the \$50 million, but not the \$100 million. I believe that will likely be the final outcome.

continued on page 6

MTA Adopts \$443 Million in Savings

The MTA Board of Directors gave final approval in August on a package of cost reductions that will potentially save \$398.5 million in rail operating costs and \$45 million in rail construction over the next 20 years.

The savings will come from more efficient construction methods for the eastside extension of the Metro Red Line, reducing the total purchase of rail cars, and changing the rail operating plan by reducing headways, rail cars, and the staff to operate them.

“Aggressive cost containment is one of our primary goals,” said MTA Chairman and Glendale City Councilman Larry Zarian at the Aug. 23 board meeting. “We must show the taxpayers that we’re using their money wisely.”

The board also adopted a plan that provides for construction of two stations at a shallower depth on the eastside extension, for a savings of \$15 million.

In another cost-saving decision, after hearing revised projections of rail car requirements, the board cut back on the purchase of L.A. Cars that are currently being assembled by Siemens-Duewag at its newly-opened plant in Carson. By reducing the number of cars from 74 to 52, the savings to the MTA will amount to \$30 million.

Further, in analyzing the rail operations forecasts that had been developed for the MTA’s 20-Year Long Range Transportation Plan, other ways to cut costs were identified. For one, it is estimated that longer intervals between trains will still meet the anticipated passenger demand without reducing ridership. Also, on those lines that will begin operating over the next 20 years, fewer rail cars will be needed than originally calculated.

Such reductions allow for lower administrative, operating and maintenance costs, totaling \$398.5 million over the 20-year period. The savings from these reductions will help offset expected cutbacks in future federal operating subsidies.

The MTA also is exploring improved project management, which it considers critical to effective cost containment. Until now, the MTA’s Engineering Management Consultant (EMC) has had the sole discretion to move funds from engineering and design to construction. In a procedural change, when about two thirds (70%) of a project’s design package reaches 60% of the final design stage, a report must be prepared for the MTA board showing how much design work is left to be done and the amount of remaining funds. This will help the MTA determine if any design funds will be available for other contingencies.

“We’re being especially vigilant regarding keeping our costs under control,” said MTA Chief Executive Officer Franklin White. “The people of Los Angeles County and our elected representatives in Sacramento and Washington expect no less.”

The MTA’s action follows a Cost Containment Workshop held July 19, and a meeting of the newly constituted Cost Containment, Contracts and Efficiency Committee on Aug. 16. The package of reductions represent options considered to be the most achievable while avoiding significant community impacts.

Separate action will be taken on cost savings proposals for the Pasadena Blue Line in September and October after an Operating Peer Review Panel completes its work. Cost-saving options for the East/West Valley Rail Line will be addressed in a major investment study now underway. ■



Other Board Actions



Harbor Freeway Transit Way

The board in September approved a plan to offer a six-month promotional fare program for all MTA bus lines that currently operate on the Harbor Freeway. The promotional fare is being introduced to help promote the new Harbor Freeway Transit Way, a portion of which is expected to open in mid or late October. The promotional fare will be available at the new Harbor Freeway/I-105 Green Line station on the Transit Way. The entire Harbor Freeway Transit Way will officially open in the summer of 1997.

The 10.3 mile fixed guideway of HOV (High Occupancy Vehicle) lanes will operate from Adams Boulevard to the Artesia Freeway, with nine stations and 3,000 parking spaces. Commuters using the facility are expected to save up to 20 minutes from those traveling on the Harbor Freeway in their automobiles.

Westside Area Bicycle Master Plan Adopted

The MTA has adopted the Westside Area Bicycle Master Plan, which will enable local jurisdictions — including Los Angeles, Santa Monica, Culver City, West Hollywood, Malibu, Beverly Hills and some incorporated areas of Los Angeles County — to seek funding for

individual projects that are consistent with the plan.

The Westside Area plan is one of six bicycle master plans being prepared by the MTA that make up the Countywide Bicycle Master Plan. As the planning and programming agency for regional bikeway funding, the MTA managed the plan's preparation to ensure the coordinated development of a regional bikeway system. In order to qualify for federal funding, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) requires that bikeway projects be part of regional transportation plans.

The countywide master plan is intended to expand the county's existing regional bikeway system in order to promote increased commuter and recreational bicycling, to improve safety for all bicyclists, and to establish a comprehensive countywide bicycle program.

The project routes included in the master plan are conceptual at this point; the exact designs and alignments will be left to the individual cities or local agencies to determine. Using the guidelines developed by the MTA for the master plan, it's estimated that a sufficient system of bikeways in the Westside area will cost about \$30

million to complete. In accordance with the MTA's Long Range Transportation Plan, individual segments of the project will be developed and completed by local agencies and funded through a combination of MTA and local agency contributions.

Reduced Fare I.D. Cards to be Developed

The MTA Board has approved a one-year, \$121,000 contract to produce reduced fare identification cards for public transit users in Los Angeles County, with authority to exercise two one-year options for renewal.

The cards are necessary to identify students for reduced fare programs. The contract covers data input, manufacturing and mailing of the cards to users. U.S. Data Source, Inc. was the low bidder for the contract and performed a trial run to establish its qualifications and compliance with technical specifications. The company also meets the MTA's DBE goal.

Advanced Technology Transit Bus Contract Amended

The MTA's contract with Northrop Grumman for the development of prototypes of the Advanced Technology Transit Bus (ATTB) has been amended by the MTA Board to provide a 60-day extension at a cost of \$1.6 million. The extension allows MTA staff to review federal budget allocations to the ATTB project for Fiscal Year 1996 and provides time for a complete analysis of the various options to the ATTB program.

In February, MTA staff began negotiations with Northrop Grumman to reduce the cost of the program and to identify other funding sources. While

continued on page 7



Jesse Simon, a transportation technical manager for the MTA, rides his bike to work from his Mt. Washington home.

Special Feature

Keep Those Buses Rolling

MTA Renews Commitment to its Bus System

The MTA Board of Directors has renewed its commitment to its bus system by adopting — as its highest priority — improvement of the quality of bus service, safety, cleanliness, comfort, and reliability, especially on those lines that serve the transit dependent.

The board met for a special workshop on Sept. 14 to review the state of the bus system. In adopting a motion made that day by Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan, the board also directed MTA CEO Franklin White to report back soon with firm timetables for implementing the recommendations made in the San Fernando Valley transit restructuring report, and to begin preparing a Bus System Improvement Plan detailing specific plans and time lines for ensuring a safe, clean and reliable bus system.

“The action taken by the board sends a strong message to the community that the bus system is a very important element of the overall transportation picture in Los Angeles, and we are bound and determined to improve its operation and are willing to invest available resources to do so,” said Board Chairman Larry Zarian as he addressed the public and media present for the workshop.

“We will continue to hold additional workshop meetings to establish a meaningful dialogue with the community aimed at restoring the bus system to a first class operation. I have made a firm commitment to the bus riders that we intend to continue to work with them to deliver the best and safest service possible.”

At the meeting, the board received a report from staff that outlines the current state of the bus system. The report covers the



many accomplishments already made in graffiti abatement, seat replacement programs and exterior painting efforts to improve the appearance of MTA buses.

“All Angelenos, particularly the poorest and neediest, must have access to excellent public transportation,” said Mayor Riordan. “Since buses comprise the vast majority of our regional transit, we must target our resources to ensure a system that is safe, clean, comfortable and reliable.”

Zarian recommended that CEO White bring to the board this month a plan to offer a six-month promotional fare program for all MTA bus lines operating on the Harbor Freeway that will stop at the New Harbor Freeway/I-105 Green Line station on the Transit Way scheduled to open in mid-October (see article on page 4). The entire Harbor Freeway Transit Way will officially open in the summer of 1997.

In addition, he also recommended that staff work with the cities of Los Angeles, Santa Monica and Long Beach to get a commitment for the establishment of special bus lanes on major thoroughfares

to speed up the delivery of transit services in the region.

As part of its report to the board, MTA staff detailed current plans for the opening of bus service on the Harbor Freeway Transit Way. The 10.3-mile fixed guideway of HOV lanes will operate from Adams Boulevard to the Artesia Freeway, with nine stations and 3,000 parking spaces. Passengers on the Green Line also will be able to transfer to and from the Transit Way.

Special service will be provided to connect South Central and South Bay destinations involving 23 MTA bus lines, the Metro Green Line, as well as transit services provided by Torrance, Gardena and LADOT. The Transit Way will also serve the Gateway Transit Center due to open in October. Commuters using the facility are expected to save up to 20 minutes over those traveling on the Harbor Freeway in automobiles.

“With the opening of the Gateway Transit Center at Union Station next month and the future opening of the Harbor Freeway Transit Way, this is a perfect opportunity

continued on page 10

Metro View,
 continued from page 3

**Can't raise fares
 or reduce service**

The legislation precludes us from raising fares or reducing our bus operation service because of the fund transfer through January 1, 1998. We would also be precluded from taking any action that would cause any other operator in the county to reduce service or raise fares during that period. We are specifically precluded from reducing fares to the Immediate Needs Transportation Program.

The bill raises the following concerns:

- It's inconsistent with the MTA Board position that approved a one-time only \$50-million grant from the MTA.
- It diverts funds from the agency, but restricts our discretion for achieving cost efficiencies.
- It allows discretion to the county in choosing the funds from which to repay the MTA. Should those funds not be eligible for use in transit operations, the financial impacts stated above may be significantly worse.
- This is not a solution to the structural problems in the county

budget, because it only provides funds for one year; i.e., the MTA could potentially be targeted again in subsequent years.

In short, the provisions that mandate no fare hikes and sustain our current levels of bus operations, security and maintenance for at least two years, limits our ability to find efficiencies. We believe the legislature's real goal is to force the MTA to curtail or eliminate rail construction — which means that the transportation future approved by the voters goes out the window and the region will lose millions in federal assistance to build a vitally-needed rail transportation system.

Despite our best intentions to help out the county during its financial crisis, it's not a good idea to penalize a public agency such as the MTA — literally threatening our very survival — due to the state's inability to manage its own business.

**Auditing Report
 confirms woes**

On top of this, as also reported in the cover story, the California State Auditor's office completed a review of

the MTA's financial obligations based on a set of specific questions posed by the state's joint legislative audit committee. The review was conducted to determine our financial capabilities in the wake of attempts to transfer funds to the county. The audit report has verified that the MTA's financial status is exactly as we've portrayed it to the legislature.

**Status of federal
 transportation dollars**

Meanwhile, we await word from Washington as to how much the federal transportation bill will provide us. The House had recommended \$125 million and the Senate \$45 million. During the last week of September, we learned that the conference committee appointed to reconcile the House and Senate versions of the bill could not reach agreement. The committee adjourned and will continue their deliberations. I believe that the conference committee will recommend a funding level for the Red Line Segment 3 project that demonstrates a continuing federal commitment to our project. ■

Popular "Funday" Fare Continues to Year's End

Noting a steady increase in the use of "Funday" fare coupons during the first three months of the program, the board has voted to continue the special fare on Saturdays as well as Sundays and holidays through Jan. 1, 1996.

Since July 2, any fare-paying passenger who boards an MTA bus on Sundays and holidays has been able to bring along a friend or relative holding a "Funday" coupon for 50 cents. The

person accompanying the fare-paying rider needs only to present the coupon to the bus operator.

With the extension of the program, riders can now take advantage of the program on Saturdays as well as Sundays, and the following holidays up to January 1: Thanksgiving Day (Thursday, Nov. 23), Christmas Day (Monday, Dec. 25) and New Year's Day (Monday, Jan. 1).

"The number of people taking advantage of the 'Funday' coupons since July has nearly tripled," noted MTA Board Member Mel Wilson, who first suggested MTA's "Funday" program. "As Thanksgiving and Christmas approach, we hope even more people will take advantage of this special fare to do their holiday shopping or to visit friends and relatives."

"A 'Funday' Transportation Guide that features a list of tourist attractions

*Other Board Actions,
continued from page 4*

the ATTB project has made technical progress toward its goals and continues to generate substantial industry interest, serious problems remain with insufficient funding.

So far, Northrop Grumman has proposed a \$13.3 million cost reduction — bringing the total program cost down to \$41.2 million from the original amount of \$54.5 million — by reducing the number of prototypes from six to two, and by eliminating national field testing. Thus, the first prototype would be completed by Oct., 1996 and the entire program could be completed by March, 1998.

Cost savings on prototype vehicles also can be accomplished by refining the current Mobile Test Bed (MTB) into a fully functioning demonstrator vehicle by integrating the technology used in a New York State program. With the successful test of New York's General Electric hybrid-electric propulsion system, it's no longer necessary to develop our own electric propulsion element. The demonstrator vehicle also could be completed sooner.

MTA Construction Committee Can Award Contracts Up to \$5 Million

The MTA Board in September delegated authority to the Construction Committee to award contracts valued between \$100,000 and \$5 million as well as authority to approve change orders between \$200,000 and \$500,000.

Delegation to the MTA's Construction Committee, which includes eight MTA board members, will reduce the amount of contract awards that must appear before the full board and greatly expedite the approval and expenditure process, thus allowing the board more time for policy issues.

These modifications are expected to save about \$265,000 annually in staff preparation time.

Two Change Orders Approved for Pasadena Line Bridge Construction Contracts

At its August meeting, the MTA Board approved the following change orders covering bridge construction for the Pasadena Blue Line:

(1) L.A. River Bridge demolition and construction: This change order reflects a decrease in the original contract amount, providing the MTA with a credit of \$41,961. The MTA's contract with Kiewit Pacific Co. called for bridge demolition and cast-in-place and segmental construction of new piers to support the double track structure; the work also included restoration of the channel liner and related work.

The quantities of concrete used for footings, retaining wall concrete, and other structures turned out to be less than the original bid quantities and a change order is now required to close out the contract. The final contract value is \$13,072,895, which reflects the credit.

(2) Arroyo Seco Bridge reconstruction: The MTA Board approved a change order in the amount of \$368,640 to reflect a revision in the scope of work, which brings the total contract value to \$10,987,074.

The original scope of work to be completed by Kiewit Pacific Co. for removal of the existing bridge structure and demolition of foundation structures, along with other work to prepare the site for the reconstructed bridge, underestimated the amount of

excavated material. As the job proceeded, it was determined that some additional 6,000 cubic yards would have to be excavated.

MTA'S CNG Buses to be Loaned to Atlanta for 1996 Olympics

The board, at its September meeting, approved the loan of 60 CNG buses to Atlanta for use during the upcoming 1996 Olympic Games. The MTA is providing these coaches in response to the national call last year for vehicles by the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG). The vehicles are necessary to meet the projected demand for up to 2,000 buses to transport both spectators and athletes to sporting venues. The Federal Transit Administration took a strong leadership role in efforts to secure buses from FTA grantees.

The loan of the 60 buses will mean that the MTA will have to continue using diesel buses that would normally have been replaced with the new CNG buses. These older buses will be replaced upon the return of the loaned buses. The ACOG will pay for transporting the buses and maintaining them during the Olympics.

MTA to Provide Vehicle Maintenance and Repair Service to Others

The MTA Board has approved the concept of the MTA providing preventive maintenance and vehicle repair to other transit operators and public agencies for two reasons:

- (1) it will more efficiently utilize MTA facilities; and*
- (2) it will generate revenue to help offset operating costs.*

MTA's Regional Rebuild Center Makes A Name for Itself

*Giant "paint job"—
 an MTA Bus goes
 through a painting
 machine.*



*Ralph de la Cruz,
 Deputy
 Executive Officer,
 MTA Operations*

The designers of the MTA's Regional Rebuild Center (RRC) clearly had something more in mind than just maintaining MTA's fleet of 2,000 buses.

When the building — then known as the Central Maintenance Facility — opened in 1987, it had full service capacity for a fleet of 5,000 buses, including the ability to rebuild a bus from the ground up. A squadron of beeping robots still delivers parts to mechanics throughout the complex as part of a sophisticated parts inventory and delivery system.

It opened with plenty of room to grow. Two years later, a full-service, state-approved, clean-air testing facility was opened, marking a major milestone in the effort to improve air quality in the Los Angeles basin. Now, with eight years under its belt, the RRC is about to realize its full potential as a competitive business venture serving a variety of outside customers.

Under the leadership of Ralph de la Cruz, MTA's deputy executive officer for operations (service delivery), MTA operations veteran Dan Ibarra is spearheading the MTA's new Local Transit Enterprise program, which in time, could be earning millions of dollars for the MTA from customers all over Southern California who require expert bus and fleet-vehicle repair work.

"This was our vision from the drawing board stage," notes Art Leahy, MTA's executive officer for operations. "We worked with our labor unions during the last negotiation to reach agreement on how labor would be utilized for outside work. We also performed some contract work for organizations such as the Los Angeles Police Department, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, the Alhambra Fire Department, and others to see if the process could work."

The program is a central element of

MTA's commitment to look closely at its assets and creatively avail them to other agencies, Leahy says. "Not only will the Local Transit Enterprise increase MTA productivity, it will assure that Los Angeles County taxpayers get the most out of their transportation tax dollars."

MTA Board member Mel Wilson first brought up the idea for such a program like this to the board last February. The following month de la Cruz provided a program outline, and Ibarra was handed the reins to make it happen. Both de la Cruz and Ibarra have expressed their excitement that this innovative program will actually create a steady positive cash flow that can, in turn, benefit taxpayers.

"It is popular to think of a government agency as 'bloated,' and unable to compete in the private sector," de la Cruz says. "But when potential maintenance customers actually see

our competitive rates along with our state-of-the-art facility, the MTA is going to have some pleasantly surprised — and pleased — new clients.”

It's a classic win-win situation, de la Cruz points out, because the customer will get the best available maintenance skills at a bargain rate by using the program, and MTA's bus and train riders will benefit from the extra revenue being generated by the program. Union members also benefit from an increase in business.

Top-flight, bumper-to-bumper bus maintenance service is a key part of the program. It will include: Engine maintenance, overhaul and repair; exterior bus painting; engine rebuilding; emissions testing; accident investigation and repair; parts procurement and distribution; new bus procurement; alternative fuels research; personnel instruction and certification; suspension and undercarriage maintenance; lab chemical testing and analysis and exterior cleaning.

The MTA is developing a full marketing and sales program to inform potential customers about the Local Transit Enterprise program. However, word of MTA's competitiveness has already spread to many potential customers, resulting in more than \$1 million in soon-to-be approved contracts.

As soon as formal documentation is complete, Foothill Transit will be rolling 102 of its buses to the RRC for major bus refurbishment and other non-engine work. This three-year agreement is for about \$570,000 a year — and that figure could go even higher, Ibarra said, if Foothill elects to have MTA perform more work than is



A beeping robot at work delivering parts at the MTA's Regional Rebuild Center.

included in the basic package.

A second agreement is under active discussion with Los Angeles Unified School District to paint 150 of its buses at a cost of about \$630,000 for one year. The contract also would include engine conversion work on 11 LAUSD buses.

Many of the smaller bus operators in the region may soon take advantage of MTA's fully-certified operator instruction program, said de la Cruz. “Many bus companies require their operators to be already trained before they're hired, simply because they don't have the resources to train new operators. This program will give those agencies a built-in instruction arm where their operators can get top-of-the-line instruction on a contract basis.”

To make operator instruction even more marketable, Ibarra plans to introduce state-of-the-art computer “virtual reality” technology, similar to that used by airlines and the space program. “These are excellent tools that can help us turn out some of the best-trained bus operators in the country,” he said.

Even MTA's bus operations control center will have the capability to be hired out. “We will be able to provide a countywide radio network, so there's no reason we couldn't offer radio communications and real-time, on-street fleet management and operations control for all transit operators in the Southern California region on a contract basis,” notes de la Cruz. ■



*Dan Ibarra,
 Director,
 Operations
 Support Services*

(Editor's note: Next month, MTA Review will feature the MTA's control center in the new Gateway Intermodal Transit Center, and its capabilities as a countywide radio network.)

Operations Overview, continued

Rail Ridership Numbers Grow as Green Line Boosts the System

The Green Line is off and running — and all reports indicate that the riders love it. More than 153,000 passengers traveled on the line during the first week of service in August, boosting ridership on both the Red and Blue lines.

On weekdays, Green Line ridership has stabilized at about 10,000. MTA ridership statistics indicate that most passengers travel west from the Norwalk and Lakewood stations during the morning rush hours. The busiest station is Imperial/Wilmington, where passengers transfer to the Blue Line, which whisks them downtown.

Ridership on the Blue Line has increased

by about a thousand; and on the Red Line, by an estimated 5,000 a day.

The airport connection

Many riders have wondered why the Green Line doesn't go directly into the airport terminals. The 1989 draft environmental impact report considered an alternative to provide direct service via a Green Line subway to an airport station located between Terminals 1 and 2. This alternative was eliminated from further consideration because of engineering difficulties.

However, a northern extension of the Green Line to Lot C is included in the

20-Year Plan. This extension, or a proposed people mover, could be built as soon as public or private funds become available.

Today, to get to LAX on the Green Line, a patron simply boards a waiting airport shuttle — the ride is free — to arrive at his or her terminal in 10 minutes. The distance is 2.9 miles.

The Disneyland shuttle

There's good news for Disneyland fans. The MTA has entered into a transit agreement with the popular theme park to provide a shuttle directly to the park from the I-605/I-105 station in Norwalk. ■

*Special Feature,
 continued from page 5*

to re-examine our bus system and make appropriate improvements," said White. "The bus system is, and will remain, the backbone of our transportation system."

In addition, the report cited several objectives that include improving transit system efficiency by reducing bus trips that parallel or duplicate rail service, improving connections to various modes of transportation by modifying existing bus routes at or near rail stations, and reinvesting any operational savings toward expansion of bus service on heavily used lines.

The board also heard testimony and bus service improvement recommendations from three community groups: the Labor/Community Strategy Center, the UCLA Department of Transportation and the Transit Management Association. ■

CNG Buses Briefly Out of Service

In late August, the MTA temporarily removed some of its 38 compressed natural gas (CNG) powered buses from service to repair minor gas leaks. The MTA was alerted to the possible leakages by the CNG bus manufacturer, Neoplan USA. A thorough inspection of all 38 buses was performed and the MTA removed 19 buses for possible leaks; four others were immediately repaired and returned to service. All 38 buses were back in service as of Sept. 9.

"The manufacturer of the fuel system, EDO Canada Ltd., and Neoplan worked closely with us to get these repairs taken care of as soon as possible," said Art Leahy, MTA's executive officer for operations. "We temporarily replaced the CNG buses with diesel

powered buses from our reserve fleet in the meantime."

Although each bus is equipped with a gas detection system that warns the driver if gas leakage is occurring, the leaks were not significant enough to be detectable, Leahy said.

"As a precaution, MTA has increased the sensitivity of the gas detection system to detect even a minute amount of gas leakage and increased the frequency of inspections," he said.

The MTA also has notified the manufacturer that the MTA will not accept any additional buses on order from Neoplan until a satisfactory solution is reached. Since the buses are still under warranty, the repairs were made at no cost to the MTA. ■

Rail Construction Outlook

Work Carries on in North Hollywood

A conservative approach describes the continuing excavation of twin subway tunnels in North Hollywood. Tunneling began last February, and has progressed almost 300 feet on the west tunnel, and over 500 feet on the east tunnel.

Work was halted several times in an on-going effort to prevent surface subsidence, as well as to perform modifications to the tunneling machines. "The delays have been a setback, but one we're willing to accept in order to accept a safe, quality project," said Stanley Phernambucq, MTA's executive officer for rail construction.

The hood on the tunnel machines has been extended, the digging arm recessed, and the power of the machine's hydraulic jacks has been increased to provide greater thrusting ability. In addition, surface grouting has been conducted in advance of both tunnels, to stabilize the soil.

"We're making every effort to keep the street clean during our grouting operations, and doing our best to minimize any disruptions to the local business community," said Phernambucq.

Safeguards in place

There are many precautions in place for the North Hollywood tunnel. For example, extensive monitoring equipment has been installed to detect settlement, and critical sections of water lines in the vicinity are exposed to observe any leaks that might develop. Personnel from the Department of Water and Power and the Southern California Gas Company are on call in the event of any utility problems, and steel struts are being installed in the expansion gaps of the tunnel's initial supports.

Excavation of the North Hollywood-to-



Universal City tunnels will take about a year. The parallel tunnels will proceed south beneath Lankershim Boulevard for a total distance of 10,541 feet to the site of the Universal City Station. There it will meet the tunnel that will be excavated from Universal City south to Hollywood; work on this tunnel is due to begin less than a year from now.

The North Hollywood segment of the Metro Red Line is scheduled to open for passenger service in 2000. ■

Metro Rail Progress

The following is a status (as of September 1) of the various Metro Rail Projects currently underway (either under construction or in the design phase):

Metro Green Line (excludes North Coast Segment)

	Project Progress	Revenue Operations Date
Design	100% completed	Orig. 10/94
Construction	100%	Aug. 12, 1995

Metro Pasadena Blue Line

	Project Progress	Revenue Operations Date
Design	82.7%	
Construction	3%	Forecast: 2002

Metro Red Line (Segment 1)

	Project Progress	Revenue Operations Date
Design	100%	Orig. 4/93
Construction	100%	Actual 1/93

Metro Red Line (Segment 2)

	Project Progress	Revenue Operations Date
Design	99%	
Construction	60%	
Wilshire Section		Orig. 7/96 Forecast 5/96
Vermont/Hollywood		Orig. 9/98 Forecast 3/99

Metro Red Line (Segment 3) North Hollywood Extension

	Project Progress	Revenue Operations Date
Design	90.3%	Orig.: 5/00
Construction	10.6%	Forecast 9/00

Metro Red Line (Segment 3) Mid-City Extension

	Project Progress	Revenue Operations Date
Design	27%	TBD
Construction	0%	

Metro Red Line Eastern Extension

	Project Progress	Revenue Operations Date
Design	30%	TBD
Construction	0%	

The Planning Perspective

**Looking Toward the Future:
 Alternative Rail Technology Vehicles**

Rail transportation is well under way in Los Angeles these days — considering the increasing ridership numbers for the Metro Blue Line, the Metro Green Line and the Metro Red Line subway (see an up-to-date report on page 10).

Considering the current and future economics of transportation, the MTA is always looking at other ways to shave transportation costs, while increasing the capacity of its transit systems.

An alternative rail car

ARTVs are passenger cars with an internal power source, commonly diesel. They're capable of operating in one or two car units or as part of a larger, "multiple unit" train. These cars are also capable of operating in a manner that's similar to light rail, but without the electric power infrastructure. The absence of the overhead catenary system and traction power substations represents a substantial capital cost savings over electrified rail transit.

The vehicles range from cars that are virtually a bus on steel wheels to high speed trains consisting of several units capable of operating at speeds in excess of 100 miles per hour.

The MTA is currently conducting an ARTV feasibility study, which involves studying the technology and its applicability to specific corridors within the county. The cities of Burbank and Glendale, along with the Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport Authority and the MTA are funding partners in the corridor aspect of the feasibility study, which is expected to be

completed this fall.

So far, the MTA has determined that about 10,000 ARTVs are operating in Europe, Asia and Australia, and that at least 15 firms currently manufacture these vehicles. Several of the firms are now pursuing the U.S. market.

Alternative Rail in the U.S.

ARTVs were used in the U.S. through the 1950s, but were phased out in the 1960s and 1970s; however, an interest in this technology has surfaced throughout the nation. One system is already operating in Syracuse, NY, and another system is under construction in Dallas, TX.

Phase 1

At the August MTA board meeting, MTA staff provided an overview of current ARTV technology and usage as part of the evaluation phase of the

project. This phase included a survey of current worldwide deployment of ARTVs and identification of potential technical considerations. Phase 1 also identified a number of other significant issues, including compliance with Federal Railroad Administration rules, disabled accessibility rules, air quality issues, local economic development potential, system connectivity, and potential operators

Next Steps

At the September MTA Board Meeting, a presentation was made by the Phase 2 study consultant, Booz, Allen & Hamilton regarding the status of their work. Based on the results of this analysis, which is expected to be completed this fall, MTA staff will recommend to the board whether to evaluate additional ART corridors, as well as whether to move toward eventual ART implementation. ■

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Community News and Events

Red Line Construction Fence is Colorful Work of Art

People passing by the Hollywood Boulevard/Argyle Street Metro Red Line construction site can see where artist Miguel Angel Reyes has turned an otherwise plain white construction fence into a dazzling, brilliantly-colored work of art.

Reyes' work depicts an alternating array of greatly enlarged portraits juxtaposed with brightly-colored flowers. The 720-foot work wraps around the construction site and along Hollywood and Argyle.

Reyes is one of four artists selected by a community-based panel for similar projects at Red Line construction sites. The projects are part of the MTA's Art for Rail Transit (A-R-T) program.

Designed to alleviate the effects of construction in the Hollywood area, Reyes' portraits are meant to depict real people, not icons. "I'm interested in doing likenesses that feel like a person, instead of simply looking like a person," said the artist.

Reyes, who attended Southwestern Junior College and the BFA/Otis Art Institute/Parson School of Design, has



Angel Reyes' colorful portraits adorn the Red Line construction site in Hollywood.

exhibited artworks in many galleries throughout West Hollywood and Los Angeles.

Long Beach Arts Month Highlights Blue Line Artists

The creators of artwork at four downtown Long Beach Metro Blue Line stations were on hand Saturday, Sept. 30, to discuss their work with the public as part of Long Beach's Arts Month festivities. The following artists and their works were highlighted:

Artist Patrick Mohr, whose work "Angel Train" at the Transit Mall Station depicts an idealized train and an imaginary conversation between two children.

Artist June Edmonds, whose work "We Know Who We Are" is derived from the artist's sketches and paintings of local people from the neighborhood around the Pacific Station.

Artist Paul Tzanetopoulos, whose work "Breezy and Delightful" focuses on textile designs reflecting the unique cultural heritage of the many groups that live and work in Long Beach, adorns the First Street Station.

Artist Jim Isermann, whose work "Failed Ideals" is composed of six stained-glass windows, will have his work installed this fall into the portholes of the pylons at the Fifth Street Station.

The works of artists Joe Lewis, Terry Braunstein and Jacqueline Dreager can be seen at other Long Beach area stations.

Eastern Bus Region Hosts Open House

The MTA's eastern region hosted an open house on Sept. 23 at its Metro East Operating Facility in El Monte to increase public awareness of the MTA's bus services in this area.

Featuring refreshments, entertainment, music and piñatas for the children, the event was held from noon to 6 p.m. Visitors were able to tour the division aboard a bus, stopping at various work stations that keep the MTA fleet up and running, including fare collection, repair and maintenance, and the fueling area.

"We wanted to create a sense of

continued on page 14



Artist Miguel Angel Reyes at work.

*Candid Camera,
continued from page 1*

rail crossing gate, getting a ticket is the best outcome," said White. "Photo enforcement is part of our continuing effort to persuade people to drive safely around our trains."

The installation of photo enforcement cameras follows a successful demonstration program conducted last year. Cameras placed at three intersections along the Blue Line reduced the violations at those intersections by as much as 92%.

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

driver's face. Imprinted on each photo is the exact date, time, location and speed of the 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.

Tickets are issued via mail by the local municipal court having jurisdiction. The photo enforcement equipment will be installed from 20th Street, just south of the Washington Boulevard Station, to Greenleaf Boulevard, north of the Artesia Station.

Enforcement is one element of the MTA's Grade Crossing Safety Improvement Program, which also includes testing advanced barriers and warning systems, sponsoring rail-safety

legislation, and providing an extensive public education effort.

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 and at least 13 confirmed deaths. ■



Forewarned is forarmed for safety!

*Other Board Actions,
continued from page 7*

So far, the board has authorized MTA staff to negotiate and enter into agreements with the following entities:

City of Bell

At its August meeting, the board approved an agreement with the City of Bell for the MTA to provide the city with non-revenue vehicle repair and maintenance services; the MTA had been the successful low bidder to the City of Bell's Request for Proposal. The final contract award is still pending, but upon award the services will be conducted at the MTA's non-revenue maintenance and repair facility in Downey. This facility has the capacity to provide services in addition to those needed for MTA vehicles.

Foothill Transit

At the September board meeting, MTA staff was authorized to negotiate and conclude an agreement with Foothill Transit to perform heavy maintenance services on 102 Foothill Transit buses at the rate of 34 buses each year, for three years. In August, Foothill Transit authorized awarding the work to the MTA. These services will also be performed at the MTA's Regional Rebuild Center (RRC), and is projected to generate \$567,000 for the MTA during the first year.

The idea for providing these services to other agencies was originally suggested by MTA board member Mel Wilson last February. ■

*Community News,
continued from page 13*

customer and community ownership of the bus system," said Tony Chavira, the eastern region's general manager. "This was a wonderful opportunity for us to get closer to our customers and to show them that we want to be good neighbors."

The eastern region includes three MTA divisions and about a third of the county, with 30 cities on its routes in the San Gabriel Valley and the cities of Artesia, Bell, Bellflower, Bell Gardens, Commerce, Downey, Huntington Park, Long Beach, Lynwood, Montebello, Monterey Park, Norwalk, Paramount, La Mirada, Lakewood, Santa Fe Springs, South Gate and Whittier. The region's 1,050 employees operate 480 buses, and 33 lines that carry about 240,000 daily passengers. ■

(Editor's Note: see related article about the RRC in Operations Overview, Page 8.)

*Linda Bohlinger is
New Executive Officer of
Planning and Programming*

Linda Bohlinger, who has been serving the MTA (and its predecessor agency, the Los Angeles County Transportation Commission, aka the LACTC) for six years as deputy executive officer for capital planning, has been named to replace Judy Wilson as interim executive officer for planning and programming. Wilson left the MTA in August to become the chief administrative officer of the Orange County Sanitation District.

Among the four principal divisions of the MTA, Planning and Programming is responsible for turning out all planning and policy documents, including the Long Range Plan.

As the deputy executive officer for capital planning, Bohlinger directed the capital planning, programming, grants management and Benefit Assessment District Program activities. Considered one of the top transportation funding experts in the country, she was the MTA's lead negotiator in securing more than \$2 billion in federal discretionary funding for Metro Red Line Segments 2 and 3, over \$1.5 billion in discretionary state rail bonds, and \$600 million in state and federal highway funds.

Bohlinger's work as chair of the Funding Subcommittee of the Governor's Emergency Relief Earthquake Task Force in 1994 was heralded throughout the industry. Her dedicated advocacy resulted in federal assistance to Los Angeles County of \$1.4 billion for freeway repair, \$200 million for local streets and road repair, and \$315 million for transit services.

Bohlinger was with the former LACTC as Manager of the Highway/TSM program before moving to Sacramento to become Deputy Director for Transit Development for the California Transportation Commission. She has also held planning positions with the Sacramento Area Council of Governments and the Southern California Association of Governments. Currently a doctoral candidate at USC, Bohlinger has a master's degree in public administration from USC and a bachelor's degree in Spanish from UC, Santa Barbara.

*Kim Kimball Named Executive
Officer of Strategic Projects*

Kim Kimball has been appointed executive officer, strategic projects, charged with leadership in the following areas: (1) identifying, monitoring, and moving ahead strategic issues; (2) working with the MTA's executive officers to institute a comprehensive performance measurement and reporting system; (3) identifying and resolving, under the deputy chief executive officer's direction, specific operational or policy differences between executive officers; (4) coordinating implementation and follow-up of CEO goals and audit recommendations made by the MTA's internal audit, the Federal Transit Administration, the MTA's office of the inspector general, or outside firms; and (5) conducting special projects and confidential studies.

Kimball will be joined in this function by Michael Gonzalez, who has been appointed the deputy executive officer for strategic projects.

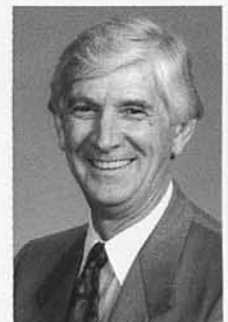
Kimball joined the MTA in 1993, bringing with him nearly 30 years of public transportation experience. Before joining the MTA, he was general manager of the Metropolitan Suburban Bus Authority in Garden City, N.Y., a subsidiary of New York City's MTA. During his seven-year tenure, he developed new bus-rail feeder standards with the Long Island Rail Road to meet the challenges of a growing suburban congestion. He was also instrumental in the purchase of buses fueled by compressed natural gas (CNG) for evaluation, and assisted in planning for increased transit accessibility for the disabled.

Over the years, Kimball has held the following positions: general manager of administration for the Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART); administrator and deputy administrator for the Mass Transit Administration in Baltimore; the executive director/general manager for the Regional Transportation District in Denver; general manager for the Alameda Contra Costa County Transit District in Oakland, and chief transportation officer of surface operations for the New York City Transit Authority.

Kimball received his undergraduate degree from the University of California at Berkeley, and also earned master's degree credits there. He is a member of several professional public transportation organizations, including the American Public Transit Association (APTA). ●



*Linda Bohlinger,
Interim Executive
Officer, Planning
and Programming*



*Kim Kimball,
Executive Officer,
Strategic Projects*

**Artist JoeSam. Kicks Off
 MTA's Meet the Artist Series**

*Funday,
 continued from page 6*

MTA Review

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Green Line artist JoeSam., whose "Hide-'n'-Seek" work is installed at the Imperial/Wilmington Station, was the first artist to meet with the public as a part of the MTA's new "Meet the Green Line Artist" series. He greeted the public and talked about his art on September 27.

JoeSam.'s work, commissioned by the MTA's A-R-T Program, consists of

colored metal cutout figures located throughout both levels of the station. The figures appear to be playfully engaged in the universally recognized game of hide-'n'-seek.

The "Meet the Artist" events will continue through the rest of 1995 and into early 1996 and will feature the creators of artwork installed all along the Green Line. ●

easily accessible from all 200 of our bus lines is available for MTA riders," said MTA CEO Franklin E. White. "We invite our visitors and residents alike to board a bus and see the sights, especially on weekends and holidays when they can take advantage of our 'Funday' fare."

The tour guide can be obtained by writing to MTA Customer Relations, P.O. box 194, Los Angeles, CA 90053, or by calling (800) COMMUTE and requesting a copy.

Discount "Funday" coupons also are available at all MTA Customer Service Centers and MTA pass sales outlets. The discount fare is not available on MTA's rail service. A complete evaluation of the first six months of the "Funday" discount fare program will be presented to the board next February. ●

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