

# MTA REVIEW

DECEMBER 1996



## CUSTOMER FIRST!

With a continued emphasis on improving bus service and better answering the needs of its customers, the MTA is launching a "Customer First" campaign that promises to make quantifiable improvements in transit operations in 100 days. Led by Ellen Levine, Executive Officer of Transit Operations, the program promises to set a new course for the future of transit operations at the MTA.

The "100-Day Action Plan" contains 28 challenges that range from expanding consumer outreach and education to improving in-service on-time performance to implementing a bus stop cleaning program. "I have issued a challenge to staff to help me develop the finest transit

operations in the nation. I've asked them what we can do to put the customer first, how we can support them so they can do their job more effectively and what barriers exist which limit their effectiveness. I received many thought-provoking comments and recommendations in response and will implement them as appropriate," said Levine.

Since taking over as the head of Operations in October, Levine has hit the ground running. She has realigned the Metro Bus regions into three rather than four. She has appointed Tony Chavira as Acting Deputy Executive Officer - Service Quality. This new section has been established to integrate and focus a variety of service quality functions, including Operations

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*Agency launches extensive campaign to better answer the needs of its customers and make improvements to transit operations in just 100 days*

I N S I D E

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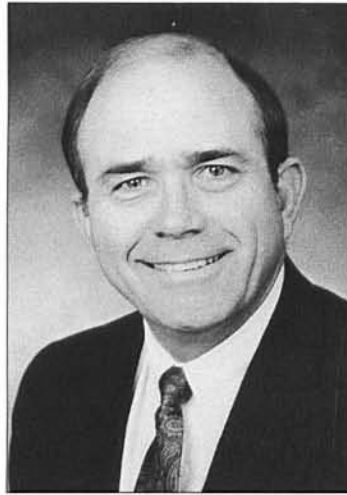
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**Joseph E. Drew**  
Chief Executive Officer

## MTA Chief Executive Officer Resigns



**M**TA Chief Executive Officer Joseph E. Drew announced his resignation on December 4.

"I made this very personal decision in the best interests of my family," said Drew. "In recent weeks I have become a focal point for controversy, and I do not want the focus on me to detract from the positive work being performed by MTA day after day as it carries out its vital mission."

The MTA Board of Directors and Drew met in closed session Thursday, Dec. 5 to discuss his tendered resignation and the transition of leadership. The Board voted to accept his resignation and Drew has agreed to stay on as chief executive officer until the end of January.

A Board committee was established to prepare a recommendation for an interim chief executive officer and executive search teams for board consideration on December 18.

Drew was appointed as MTA's Deputy Chief Executive Officer in May 1995. In December of last year the Board appointed Drew Interim CEO and offered him the permanent position in March.

## GOODYEAR CONTRACT TO SAVE MTA \$20 MILLION

**T**he MTA will save nearly \$20 million over the next five years by using radial tires on all Metro Buses.

This will reduce MTA's tire leasing bill by 50 percent over a 5-year period. The changeover to stronger, longer-lasting radial tires will be complete by May 1997.

A recent bus tire leasing contract, signed with The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. in July, will save the MTA \$4 million a year or approximately \$20 million in five years. The leasing agreement would have been nearly twice as much if the agency had stayed with traditional 'bias' style bus tires.

The radials will, on average, last 20,000 miles longer than regular tires. They also will result in better fuel mileage and a safer ride for Metro Bus patrons.

According to MTA, officials, by saving nearly \$20 million in five years, the MTA can now direct extra money to other vital bus service improvement projects. More importantly, passengers will be provided with a more comfortable ride.



# The Board Report

## NEW OFF-PEAK BASE FARE INTRODUCED ON TWO LINES

Approved the establishment of an off-peak base fare of 75¢ on two bus lines. On December 2 the MTA began offering a special off-peak discount fare on Metro Line 40 (South Bay Galleria Transit Center- Hawthorne-Inglewood-Los Angeles County Jail) and Metro Line 42 (Los Angeles-Westchester-LAX City Bus Center). These two lines are used predominately by the transit-dependent.

The 75¢ fare represents a savings of 60¢ off the regular cash fare of \$1.35. Seniors and the disabled pay only 35¢.

The new fare structure currently applies only to Metro Lines 40 and 42 and is available from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Additional Metro Bus lines for possible inclusion in the special 75¢ off-peak fare program will be identified in January with implementation scheduled for March.

## COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT FOR HOLLYWOOD CORRIDOR

Approved a cooperative agreement between the City of Los Angeles and the MTA to administer and operate a cleaning and graffiti abatement program for the Hollywood Construction Impact Program for the period of January 1, 1997 through June 30, 1998 at a cost of \$500,000.

Since 1992, the agency has had a program for Hollywood Boulevard that included funds for cleaning sidewalks, construction zones, surrounding buildings and windows along with graffiti abatement to the Hollywood corridor impacted by Metro Rail construction. The City of Los Angeles will administer the contract, in partnership with the MTA, and will target local community organizations to provide services.

## REDUCTION IN BICYCLE PARKING AND PERMIT FEES

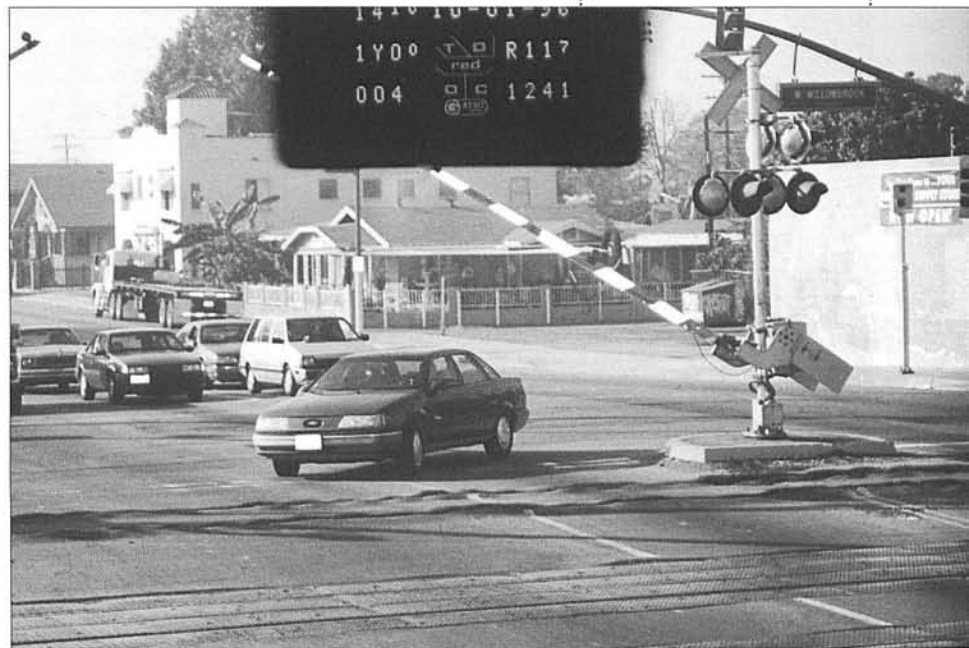
Approved the elimination of the bicycle boarding permit fee and a reduction in the fee structure for bicycle locker rentals to \$9 for three months, \$15 for six months and \$25 for 12 months.

## METRO BLUE LINE GRADE CROSSINGS

Authorized the installation of photo enforcement equipment at twelve additional Metro Blue Line grade crossings.

This program, established in cooperation with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, the municipal courts, and traffic engineering officials in the cities of Compton and Los Angeles, has completed work at five Metro Blue Line grade crossings. The results have shown substantial reductions in the number of traffic violations.

MTA  
BOARD  
ACTIVITIES  
FOR  
NOVEMBER  
1996



*The photo enforcement equipment at Metro Blue Line grade crossings has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of traffic violations. These special cameras record the date and time of the violation, the speed of the vehicle and the number of seconds the car is in to the violation.*



# New Staff

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MTA

## Gisselle Acevedo-Franco



Gisselle Acevedo-Franco has been named MTA Director of Government Relations and Public Affairs.

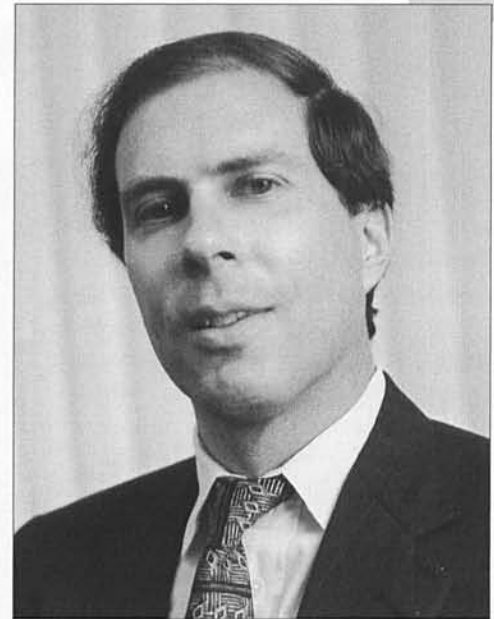
Acevedo-Franco will oversee the MTA's Governmental Affairs unit, the agency's liaison with local, state and federal officials, and the Public Affairs staff, which conducts community outreach in areas served by the MTA, particularly neighborhoods impacted by Metro Rail construction.

Acevedo-Franco comes to the MTA from MedPartners/Mullikin, where she was Director of Communications and Public Relations. She was responsible for strategic planning and management of all public relations and communications for West Coast operations, serving more than 800,000 members.

She also served as Director of Multi-Cultural Outreach/Communications for Protection and Advocacy, Inc., and Executive Director for the Coalition for a Non-Violent City.

She received a Bachelor of Arts from Immaculate Heart College, a master's at California State University, Los Angeles and a law degree from Loyola Law School, Loyola Marymount.

## Marc Littman



Marc Littman has been appointed MTA Director of Public Relations bringing with him twenty-two years of award-winning journalism and public relations experience.

Littman will oversee the MTA's Media Relations, Metro Art and Internal Communications units.

Most recently with the Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles, Littman served as Acting Public Affairs Director where he was responsible for overseeing all phases of marketing, public information, media and community relations, and legislative liaison work for the nation's largest redevelopment agency.

The transportation field is no stranger to Littman who worked for one of the MTA's predecessor agencies, the Southern California Rapid Transit District from 1981 to 1987 as a Senior Communications Representative with the News Bureau.

He has also worked for various newspapers as both reporter and editor and held a position in public affairs with California State University, Northridge (CSUN).

Littman received a Bachelor of Arts in political science/journalism from CSUN.

Service Quality, Maintenance Quality Assurance and Zero-Tolerance Program coordination. He will also assist divisions in developing and implementing new service quality improvement initiatives. "We want to ensure that our riders have the cleanest, best-maintained, safest, and most reliable buses. By elevating these functions, we believe we'll be able to make significant progress," said Levine.

Other transit improvement programs are currently being looked at include improving output and reliability of rebuilt engines and transmissions and implementing a program to recondition retirement-age buses which must be retained for expanded service. In addition, a new vacuum technology for cleaning bus interiors is being tested at one operating facility.

Levine is also interested in implementing many of these new service enhancements as soon as possible. Thanks to the joint efforts of the MTA and the Los Angeles Department of Transportation, Metro Blue Line train speed has increased 10% in peak-period trips without increasing cost. The increase is thanks to the re-synchronization of traffic signals along the line's Pico Boulevard to Washington Boulevard-Long Beach Avenue segment in downtown Los Angeles. The program has shaved four minutes off a 15-minute trip and results in significantly less crowding.

A major program designed to clean bus stops was implemented in December, undertaking tasks for which the MTA has historically not had responsibility. The program involves using crews of community service workers under the guidance of an MTA employee taking to the streets to clean bus stops in areas that need it most. In the future, additional equipment including steam cleaners and graffiti paint-out equipment will be added. Operations is also implementing an "Adopt-a-Stop" program which enlists the partnership of cities, community organizations and local businesses in ensuring bus stops are well-maintained. "This is a great low-cost program because it utilizes probation and community service workers, and by creating partnerships with the community, there's the potential to further reduce costs," said Levine.

The agency is also currently replacing bus windows in an effort to improve the look of the fleet. The window replacement program involves replacing the darker-tinted windows with clear windows that have a "sacrificial

covering" on the interior that can be easily and inexpensively replaced in the event of vandalism. Many of the agency's new buses currently have these windows and another 900 buses will have them by spring. This new program will result in significant savings to the agency in the battle against vandalism because the "sacrificial covering" is less expensive than the plexiglass window and can be replaced in approximately five minutes, whereas previously it took one hour or more to replace the entire window.

Levine has also convened an Operations Task Force comprised of 50 management employees from across the organization and members of union leadership who have been meeting to evaluate the current regional structure for managing Metro Bus operations and developing recommendations to improve the agency's performance. Some of the areas the committee is looking at include improving coordination among regions, improving service and support to frontline employees, improving Metro Bus service at all points of customer contact, improving the condition of the Metro Bus fleet, identifying efficiencies to fund service quality improvement and service expansion and enhancing the quality of worklife for MTA employees. Committee meetings are scheduled weekly with the intent of developing specific programs for implementation by the end of January.

While this program is designed to make some measurable changes in a 100-day period, Levine stresses that the program will be ongoing. "We're not going to sit back at the conclusion of this campaign and say we've done our job. It's a jump-start to a continually evolving program designed to make the Metro System the best."

According to Levine, "We're striving hard to tell our customers that we appreciate them. We already provide safe, reliable service and we're going to be working on achieving some other elements of quality service. We know they have a choice and we want the Metro System to be their choice."

100-Day  
Action  
Plan  
Challenges  
Staff  
To  
Put  
Customer  
First!

# Employees Provide Winning Suggestions to Improve

6

Los Angeles

County

Metropolitan

Transportation

Authority

When it comes to understanding bus service, perhaps no one is more qualified than an MTA employee. Which is precisely why when the agency was looking for ways to better its bus system, employees were the obvious place to start.

Called "100 Ways to Improve Bus Service," this innovative contest sought input from all employees in every department on ways to improve bus service. "MTA employees are in a better position to see how to make tangible improvements than anyone else," said Joseph E. Drew, MTA CEO. "We simply provided them with the chance to put their knowledge, insight and creativity to work, and earn the recognition of their peers along the way. Improving bus service is our top priority and we see this contest as a great way to determine ways to do this."

Over 370 submissions were received and judged by an executive panel with representatives from Operations, Regional Transportation and Development and Customer Services and Communications. Each suggestion was considered for practicality, cost savings potential, innovation, contribution to productivity and customer friendliness. A majority of the 100 ideas will be implemented in 1997, while some still require further study and analysis.

"Most of these 100 ideas represent a lot of practical ways to make improvements," said Drew. "They are the kinds of things you notice when you are on the job day in and day out and recognize chances that could make public transportation a little easier, a little more efficient and more attractive to our customers."

### ***The following ideas received special recognition:***

**Best Overall Idea:** Place comment/suggestion cards on all buses for customer convenience and input.

**Most Innovative:** Make bus passes available for purchase through Automated Teller Machines.

**Customer-Friendly:** Provide system maps and schedules in book form.

**Time-Saving:** Introduce "Smart Card" fare collection system on buses.

**Cost-Reduction:** Implement overtime management system.

**Image-Building:** Require management to ride on all Metro services on a regular basis.

### ***The following is a complete listing of the remaining "100 ways to improve bus service":***

- Clean bus seats with wire brush.
- Put bus schedules and route information on Internet.
- Assign Metro ambassadors to ride on buses.
- Produce and distribute Holiday Greetings cards to passengers.
- Build multi-take one holder behind driver's headboard.
- Put comprehensive route map in Patsaouras Plaza.
- Adhere grip strips to stairs of bus to prevent passengers from slipping.
- Create game to encourage patrons to purchase bus tokens.
- Make Customer Information Service accessible through the Internet.
- Add new buses to MTA system.
- Create a "lotto" game using the serial numbers on Metro passes.
- Put Braille information on bus stop poles.
- Sell tokens through vending machines.
- Require management to visit operating divisions on a regular basis.
- Implement a program that personalizes the operators and maintenance team responsible for that bus.
- Establish standards of hours per job type at divisions.
- Give pertinent news articles or releases to Customer Information Agents and Supervisors.
- Post route maps at bus stops.
- Create Metro gift certificates for Metro services.
- Install machines to print programmed transfers on buses.
- Initiate Annual customer appreciation month.
- Start Metro Club for Metro passengers.
- Put silent radio/electronic news board on buses.
- Extend customer service telephone hours.
- Institute adopt-a-bus program.
- Establish toll-free phone line for suggestions.
- Put customer service information on bus poles.
- Hand clean bus interiors with a cloth.
- Add new buses to Division 5 fleet.
- Provide 24-hour customer information line access.
- When calling for information, inform customers on hold how long the estimated wait will be.



# Improve Bus Service

- Post 1-800# on buses.
- Deploy more transit police on buses.
- Extend northbound 310 to Metro Green Line.
- Post rules of bus courtesy on board buses.
- Have roving information centers service bus stops.
- Have a picture of operator on bus giving thanks to customers.
- Install a signal on buses to indicate to one another when a passenger wants to transfer.
- Make 1-800# accessible to those who have difficulty being understood.
- Improve coordination of lines 180 & 485 on North Lake in Pasadena.
- Promote MTA team spirit by sponsoring contest among divisions in each region.
- Make route schedules available on all buses.
- Install video cameras on buses.
- Provide personalized brochures for particular lines.
- Post signage asking patrons to disembark through rear door.
- Place "how to get there by bus" signs at airport terminal.
- Create express service from selected pull-outs and pull-ins.
- Create more limited stop services.
- Install air fresheners or odor neutralizers on buses.
- Put signage at each bus bay in Patsaouras Plaza.
- Buy fleet of smaller utility buses.
- Focus on bus interior cleanliness.
- Put customer comment form on timetables.
- Improve wait time on phone system call back.
- Change name of *Customer Information* to *Metro Information*.
- Open restrooms at El Monte Station earlier on weekends.
- Redesign bus interiors.
- Carry law enforcement officers for free.
- Increase bus service to overloaded areas.
- Implement "5 ways to improve your ride" program for passengers.
- Make car cards unique to each division outlining service changes.
- Revive on-time warranty program.
- Have MTA employees attend annual courtesy class.
- Reduce number of bus types.
- Add a trip to line 180 for Pasadena City College night school students.
- Make Customer Information line more user friendly.
- Add more low-floor buses for disabled passengers.
- Strive to make buses graffiti free.
- Transfer patrons from every connecting line to save time.
- Identify lines where bus has time advantage and promote them.
- Passenger restrictions should be lifted on line 497.
- Improve sign lighting and overall ambiance of LAX transit center.
- Provide pocket sized information cards for operators.
- Develop business plan specifically to increase ridership.
- Display next stop to passengers on board bus.
- Encourage all employees to focus on respect, integrity, pride and commitment.
- Set up network with other transit properties for the sale and exchange of parts not in use.
- Prioritize bus stop improvements by loading volumes.
- Increase the number of buses on lines 204, 251, 108 and 4.
- Use take ones and car cards to educate passengers on proper use of bus.
- Put ads on buses and trains indicating that police are patrolling.
- Produce commercial messages on correct bus usage to be shown in transit centers, malls, etc.
- Investigate use of super lubricants to improve engine condition.
- New routes should be established linking underserved areas.
- Check boxes for schedule holders and clearance lights should be added to Vehicle Condition Report Card.
- Operators should be held to high driving standards.
- Have scheduling department write additional connection notes for operators.
- Allow enough running time to ensure positive connection day and night.
- Put APTA safety award seal on side of buses.
- Post frequency and connection information at bus stops.
- Improve overall image of MTA by advertising services.
- Put Transit Police on buses where there have been the most problems.
- Put information regarding first and last bus and time between buses at bus stop.



## DIRECTOR DEANE DANA RETIRES



**C**ounty Supervisor Deane Dana has retired from the MTA Board of Directors as well as from his supervisory post. As one of the five Los Angeles County Supervisors who have seats on the board, Dana represented the Fourth Supervisorial District since 1980.

Supervisor Dana brought to the Board 28 years of marketing, administrative and engineering experience with Pacific Telephone Company. He earned a mechanical engineering degree from Steven Institute in Hoboken, NJ and is a registered engineer with the State of California.

He served as chairman of the former Los Angeles County Transportation Commission (LACTC) in 1986, as well as two years as chairman of the Regional Airport Authority from 1987-1988.

Dana was noted for playing a key role in transportation improvements. During his tenure, 49 miles and 44 stations of the Metro Rail system have been completed, transporting nearly 100,000 passengers a day.

The Supervisor and his wife Doris have four children and six grandchildren.

Dana's successor on the MTA Board will be newly-elected Fourth District Supervisor Don Knabe.

## SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD TRANSIT PARKWAY STUDY

**T**he MTA is looking for ways to turn Santa Monica Boulevard into a more pleasant-appearing, less-congested major thoroughfare - allowing both motorists and bus riders to proceed at a swifter pace because of improved traffic flow.

"The public has been given several opportunities to influence the final plan to widen and beautify Santa Monica Boulevard between the 405 Freeway and the Beverly Hills city limit at Moreno Drive at the MTA's three Project Refinement Study community workshops," said Joseph E. Drew, MTA's Chief Executive Officer, adding "This input is currently being incorporated into the final recommendation."

A central feature of the new boulevard will be a single main roadway with greatly simplified intersections to improve safety and lessen congestion. Various configurations of one-way or two-way frontage roads are under consideration.

The project may be accentuated by extensive center median landscaping, improved sidewalks and bus stops and pedestrian crosswalks plus an array of possible amenities, including bicycle lanes and other street beautification features.

"The most important decisions involve the exact number of lanes, the availability of parking and the arrangement of frontage roads off the main thoroughfare," Drew said. "That's why we wanted to hear from the public."

Since February, the MTA's Project Team has worked extensively with residents, businesses and other stakeholders to evaluate alternative concepts for improving Santa Monica Boulevard. The MTA has also communicated with the community through separate task force presentations, a public survey and a 11,500-circulation newsletter containing the latest updates.

The MTA Board will be making the final selection on the concept for this project in January.



## ARROYO SECO BRIDGE GETS A FACELIFT

Thanks to funding from the MTA, the Arroyo Seco Bridge in the Highland Park/South Pasadena area was recently rehabilitated. The last trains crossed the bridge in 1994, but the bridge is now restored by the MTA in keeping with its original style, and will see a new birth of the rail age when it becomes part of the Metro Blue Line to Pasadena.

The bridge was disassembled two years ago and rehabilitated according to the restoration guidelines of the Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission. It now includes a new roadbed that provides for two train tracks instead of the original single track.

The Arroyo Seco Bridge played an important role in the development of the Los Angeles area for nearly 100 years as a link for the transcontinental railroads that brought goods, business and millions of newcomers into the city.

According to Joseph E. Drew, MTA CEO, "The Arroyo Seco Bridge was a critical link in the transportation system of this region for nearly a hundred years. It now stands ready to serve the people of Los Angeles for another century."

## RAIL RIDERSHIP NEARS 100,000 A DAY

Ridership increased on all Metro Rail lines in September, just about reaching the 100,000 level for an average weekday.

Estimates for all three lines totaled 99,100 a day.

On the Metro Red Line alone, ridership increased 61 percent over the previous year to 36,500, the highest tally yet. Patronage has increased steadily since July when the Metro Red Line was extended to include three new stations along the Wilshire corridor.

Patronage on the Metro Blue Line increased 13 percent to 45,500 daily boardings compared to last year. Metro Green Line ridership increased to a new record of 17,100 riders a day, up 60 percent over the year before.

Statistics show that nearly one of ten Metro passengers use Metro Rail services.

One  
of  
Ten  
Metro  
Passengers  
Use  
Metro  
Rail  
Services



*The Arroyo Seco Bridge located in the Highland Park/South Pasadena area has been rehabilitated thanks to funding from the MTA. The bridge was first completed in 1894. The structure was rebuilt in 1913 and again in 1923. Restored in keeping with its original style, the bridge will become part of the Metro Blue Line to Pasadena.*

# Metro Blue Line

## PASSENGERS ENJOY A SHORTER TRIP ON THE METRO BLUE LINE

Running a mile in less than four minutes is one standard of excellence - another is riding MTA's very popular Long Beach to Los Angeles Blue Line and reaching your destination four minutes sooner.

That particular standard became a reality for some 48,000 daily Metro Blue Line passengers in mid-October as a result of a joint project undertaken by the MTA and the Los Angeles Department of Transportation which resulted in the synchronization of a block of traffic signals along the line's Pico Boulevard-Washington Boulevard-Long Beach Avenue segment in downtown Los Angeles, following a September 30-October 11 test period to work out the kinks.

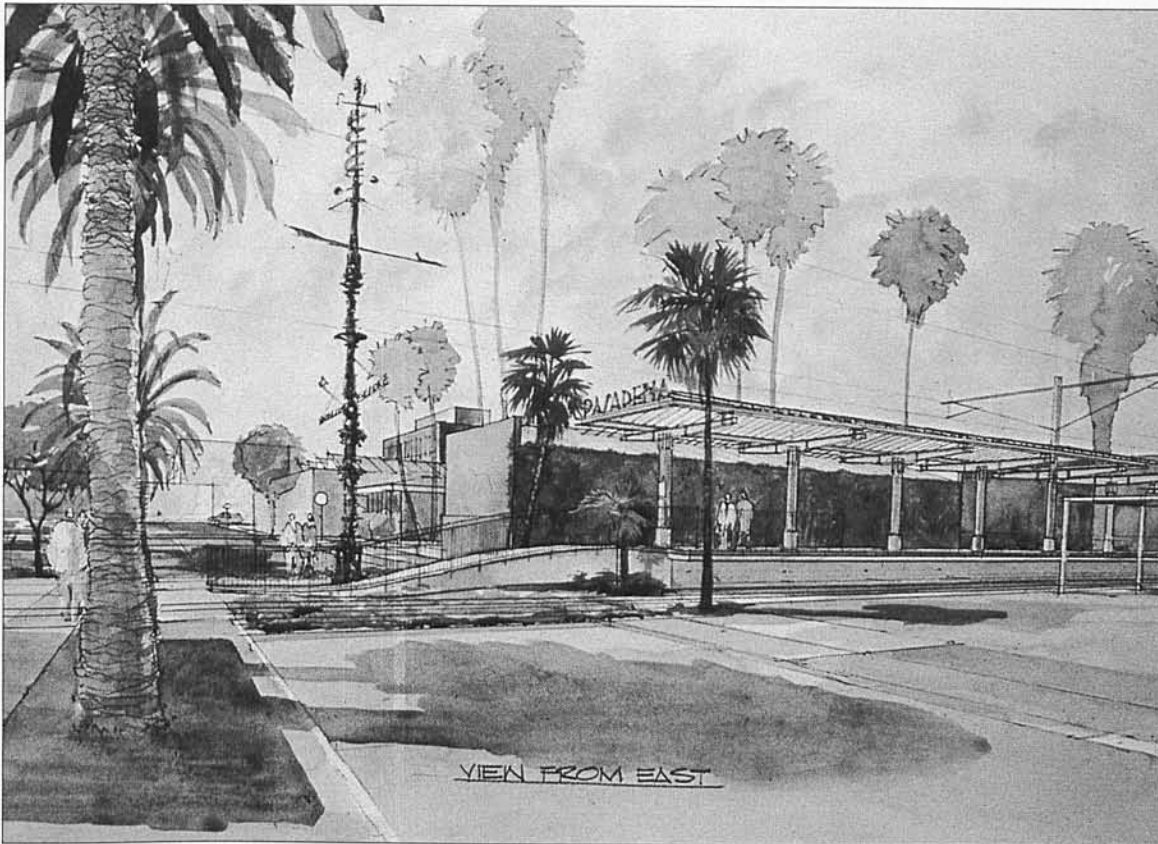
The signals, now generally timed to remain green whenever a Metro Blue Line train approaches intersections along that stretch, will allow the train to proceed non-stop most of the

time. For instance, a previous 15-minute trip from Washington Boulevard/Long Beach Avenue to 7th Street/Metro Center now takes only 11 minutes and may be reduced by another minute by the end of December.

"We are continually looking for ways to provide better service to our passengers," said Joseph E. Drew, MTA CEO. "And we are definitely planning to convert the savings on the Metro Blue Line into more service in the near future."

*Metro Blue Line passengers traveling to downtown Los Angeles enjoy a shorter trip.*





## PASADENA BLUE LINE TO GET \$48.5 MILLION IN STATE FUNDS

The California Transportation Commission today approved \$48.5 million to allow for completion of activities now in process for the Metro Blue Line to Pasadena; connecting Union Station in downtown Los Angeles to Pasadena.

The funds will be used for the rehabilitation of bridges, for the final design work on the rail line and design and construction of the Pasadena Transportation Center.

The actual date for completion of the Metro Blue Line to Pasadena still has to be determined by the board, but this represents an important step towards keeping the project on schedule and within budget.

The total cost for the line is budgeted at \$803.9 million. To date, \$174.4 million has been spent on the project.

*The Metro Blue Line to Pasadena has been awarded State funds to allow for the completion of the line that will connect Union Station in downtown Los Angeles to Pasadena. Pictured above is an artist rendering of the Fillmore Station in Pasadena.*

So far, 80 percent of the design work and approximately 8 percent of the construction on the new line has been completed.

The Pasadena Transportation Center, which will be supported with these funds, is a joint project between the MTA and the City of Pasadena. It will include bus bays, parking facilities and bicycle access.

In granting the \$48.5 million, the State Commissioners pointed out that the MTA has "a commitment with the State of California to complete the Pasadena Blue Line expeditiously and cost-effectively."



## AGENCY MOURNS THE PASSING OF BOARD MEMBER PEREZ



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**A**fter a brief illness, Director Raul R. Perez passed away on October 26, 1996.

Perez represented the Southeast Corridor on the Board of Directors of the MTA from September 1994 and as an alternate member from February 1993 to September 1994. He had been a councilman for the City of Huntington Park since 1990.

During his tenure on the MTA Board, Director Perez served as the Chair of the Construction Committee and as a member of the Cost Containment, Contracts & Efficiency and the Executive Performance Committees, as well as representing the MTA on the Southern California Regional Rail Authority and the LOSSAN Corridor Board.

Director Perez was a strong advocate of public transportation in Los Angeles County and through his efforts the Metro Rail system was expanded, portions of the regional system were privatized, labor contracts were successfully negotiated and concluded, and the Alameda Corridor project was funded in part by the MTA.

Perez is survived by his wife Rosa, his sons, Raul and Ryan, and by his mother, two sisters and three brothers.



*Metropolitan  
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Los Angeles, CA 90012-2932*

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