

MTA REVIEW

MAY 1997

Hooray for Hollywood!



These tunnel rail workers are helping lay the tracks and foundation for an expected second Golden Age of Hollywood Boulevard, a transformation set to begin in late 1998 when the 4.5-mile extension of the MTA's Metro Red Line subway from Wilshire and Vermont to the world-famous Hollywood and Vine opens to the public. The new extension of the Metro Red Line, featuring stations on Vermont at Beverly, Santa Monica, and Sunset as well as on Hollywood Boulevard at Western and Vine will make it much easier for millions of visitors from around the globe to visit the film capital of the world, improve transit services for Los Angeles residents, plus attract retail development. In this photo, workers insert wooden forms that will become pliths on which the rail will rest and be bolted into after concrete is poured and hardens. By the year 2005, ridership on the Metro Red Line, which by that time is expected to extend to North Hollywood from Union Station in downtown Los Angeles, will average 297,000 passengers a day.

I N S I D E

The Board Report

**Out Front and Behind the Scenes
Government Relations**

Gateway is a Winner

**Metro Customers Give Service
High Marks**

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Linda Bohlinger

Interim Chief Executive Officer

METRO VIEW



**By Linda Bohlinger
MTA Interim Chief Executive Officer**

MTA's contracts with three of its major labor unions, the United Transportation Union (UTU), the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) and the Transportation Communications Union (TCU), expire June 30, 1997. These unions represent our bus and rail operators, our mechanics and service attendants and many of the employees who fill clerical positions at the Gateway headquarters building and at our 14 operating divisions.

Our Labor Relations Department and representatives of the unions began negotiations in April. We are hopeful that the successful completion of those negotiations will result in an MTA that is better-able to realize its mission to improve transportation options, customer service and transit performance in the region. We want to do this through the wise use of existing resources, public funds and through collaborative relationships and agreements within MTA and between MTA and its unions.

We have offered a fair and equitable package to our unionized employees and we hope to conclude agreements quickly and amicably. However, we are aware that the negotiations may be protracted and there could even be a work stoppage.

MTA has the responsibility for planning for such a work stoppage contingency, since many of our passengers have no other means of mobility, and two-thirds of our riders heavily depend upon the MTA for daily transportation.

A major component of MTA's contingency plan is the issuing of requests for proposals to transportation companies that can provide buses, drivers and other needed services in the event of a work stoppage. In addition, we are seeking employees who are interested in volunteering to perform alternative duties in the event of a work stoppage.

We are making every effort to conclude these negotiations in a timely fashion that will be satisfactory to all parties concerned. At the same time, we feel it is important to tell you about our contingency plans because it is our sincere desire to have little or no impact on our riding public.

We will continue to keep you informed about negotiation progress through this newsletter. For up-to-date route and schedule information, please continue to call **1-800-COMMUTE**.



The Board Report

MTA
BOARD
ACTIVITIES
FOR
APRIL
1997

NEW VISION, UPDATED MISSION AND STRATEGIC GOALS ADOPTED

The Board adopted a unified vision, mission and strategic goals for the MTA that will help provide direction and focus for the organization's 2020 Long Range Plan, five-year Strategic Business Plan and annual budgeting process. The following details those components along with steps the agency has already taken to reach these goals.

2020 Vision: Our region will offer a better quality of life where all people can travel quickly, economically and safely in a clean environment.

MISSION STATEMENT:

*To provide the leadership and resources for a safe, efficient transportation system that keeps LA County moving.
A better tomorrow rides on us.*

STRATEGIC GOALS:

- **Fiscally responsible:** In a constrained fiscal environment, we optimize resources to achieve operational and regional effectiveness; we control costs, increase revenue/funding opportunities and improve the way services are provided, both internally and externally.
- **Customer-focused:** We direct our efforts toward providing efficient, cost-effective and courteous service for all our customers.
- **Community and regionally-responsive:** We are an active partner with our diverse communities in developing our regional transportation system and contributing to the vitality of the region.

- **Employee-supportive:** Our employees are our most valuable resource. We enhance employee performance and satisfaction by strengthening skills, teamwork and morale and by working together with trust and mutual respect.

The MTA is currently working to achieve these strategic goals. In the area of fiscal responsibility, the budget process has been redesigned, the procurement department consolidated and streamlined, and a formal business planning process has begun to keep the agency focused on its goals.

The agency is also making significant efforts to become more customer-focused through its ridership surveys (see story on page 11), through defining and implementing customer service standards such as reduced overcrowding on buses and through the "On Time Guarantee" program.

In the area of community and regional responsiveness, the agency has worked to strengthen leadership in regional transportation planning, is conducting an annual stakeholder survey and linking the Long-Range Plan with the five-year strategic business plan and annual budget.

In an attempt to be more supportive of employees, the agency completed the first employee satisfaction survey, increased management and staff skills through redesigned and expanded training and is working to resolve remaining merger issues such as a unified retirement plan.

SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAM

The Board authorized staff to implement a Small Business Enterprise (SBE) as an alternative to the currently adopted Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) and Women Business Enterprise (WBE) Programs. The recent United States 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruling, upholding the California Civil Rights Initiative (Proposition 209), prohibits the continued implementation of the Authority's State and Local Minority and Women-Owned Business Programs. The Small Business Enterprise program is a race and gender-neutral program. This program enhances the participation of all small business seeking contracting opportunities with the Authority. Approximately 90% of the existing M/WBES can be grandfathered into the SBE Program.

TRANSIT OPERATIONS AND CUSTOMER INFORMATION Employees of the Year

4

MTA



The MTA recently honored the top employees in transit operations and customer information for 1996. From left are Alex Rocio, "Bus Maintenance Employee of the Year"; Ricardo Miranda, "Rail Operator of the Year"; Juan Pena, "Bus Operator of the Year"; John Barocca, "Rail Maintenance Employee of the Year"; and Greg Pitts, "Customer Information Operator of the Year."

The MTA recently feted its own with the naming of the top employees for 1996 in Transit Operations and Customer Information. This coveted recognition rewards employees in various areas of the agency who have gone above and beyond the call of duty. These employees were honored at the annual awards luncheon held in May.

The "Bus Operator of the Year" is Juan Pena. A driver out of the West Hollywood Division, Pena is routinely commended for his friendly and helpful attitude in dealing with the public. Hired in 1980, he always manages to bring a youthful approach to his work and is admired by his colleagues for his high degree of motivation.

Alex Rocio is "Bus Maintenance Employee of the Year." A Mechanic "A" assigned to the Chatsworth Division, Rocio has been an employee for 45 years. Described as a delight to work with, Rocio has received superior rating in the areas of performance, initiative, job knowledge/ability, attitude, safety habits and attendance.

The "Customer Information Operator of the Year" is Greg Pitts. Pitts was commended for his courteousness and for being very efficient in his dealings with the calling public. He not only shows his excellence in providing quality customer service, he also assists in schedule room activities, which include mailing of bus timetables, brochures and pamphlets to MTA customers. Pitts has been an employee since 1975 and has been recognized several times for his superior service.

Ricardo Miranda has been named "Rail Operator of the Year." Miranda was commended for being very dependable and for always going the extra mile to ensure a job well done. He joined the agency in 1975 and has been with the Metro Green Line since 1994.

The "Rail Maintenance Employee of the Year" award went to John Barocca, Maintenance Specialist. Barocca's skill and experience are considered to be great assets to the Metro Rail system. He has performed many tasks that were "above and beyond the call of duty." In doing some of these tasks, he has helped streamline rail operations, made difficult jobs easier and safer and saved the MTA thousands of dollars in the process. Barocca has been with the agency since 1978.

"We're very proud of these employees and the thousands of other MTA employees who perform exemplary tasks on a day-to-day basis," said Linda Bohlinger, Interim MTA Chief Executive Officer.

The MTA also sponsors an Employee of the Month program in each unit of the agency. The top employee from this group will be named later in the year.

**DOUBLE YOUR PLEASURE
ADDED VALUE
PROGRAMS BENEFIT
METRO CUSTOMERS**

The MTA has always preached that the benefits of taking Metro Bus and Metro Rail include both cost and time savings. But did you know by taking advantage of coupons distributed on board, riders are also sometimes privy to special discounts at Southland attractions?

It's true. The MTA's Marketing Department frequently arranges joint sponsorships for the benefit of its riders. Among the Metro System's marketing partners is Kurt Schwartzkopf, Regional Marketing Director for Ringling Brothers, which also produces Disney's World On Ice shows. He says the special discount coupons for the circus and other productions offered on Metro Bus and Metro Rail have been wildly successful. Metro System coupon redemptions at the recent local presentations of "Pocahontas On Ice" represented up to 40% of the gate. In fact, Schwartzkopf says, redemptions at all shows (since the inception of the MTA relationship two years ago) have been the best of any promotion they do.

He also relates a story in which, while scanning the ticket lines at a recent show, he overheard a man ask a woman where she got her Metro discount coupon. When the woman told him, the man replied, "I guess I should start taking the bus." Of course, we agree with him!



MTA Government Relations

6

You try to
build
consensus
at the
local level,
the state level
and in Congress
to provide more
money for
transportation

OUT FRONT AND BEHIND THE SCENES IN EFFORTS TO SECURE FUNDING AND DEVELOP TRANSPORTATION POLICY

MTA has planned hundreds of miles of bus routes, built 48 miles of rail line to date, funded carpool lanes and bikeways, and created the Freeway Service Patrol and Emergency Call Box system. These were all at one time great ideas, but it took more than merit to get them from the planning room to the asphalt and the tracks.

It took consensus and it took money.

A small group of men and women tucked away in a corner of the 19th floor at MTA's Gateway Transit Center headquarters known collectively as Government Relations is charged with getting both.

The people of Government Relations are lobbyists. It's a word that raises the eyebrows of some, but Director Gisselle Acevedo-Franco and her colleagues say lobbyists are merely advocates and it's a role they assume with great pride.

"Our mission is to help develop legislation and transportation policy, and to act as the voice for the more than 9 million people of Los Angeles County," says Acevedo-Franco.

"You try to build consensus at the local level, the state level and in Congress to provide more money for transportation," says Arthur Sohikian, who goes to bat for the MTA in Congress. "At the same time many other special interests also are in the ring competing for a part of what now is a smaller pot of money."

"Make no mistake, there's considerable passion in the debate over transportation," says Sohikian. "And you'll never get politics out of the decision-making process."

Operating with a \$2.8 billion annual budget, MTA is charged with building and operating a comprehensive transportation system. To be sure, without the federal government as a major funding partner, many of MTA's goals wouldn't be realized.

Locally, voters in Los Angeles County voted twice for half-cent sales taxes to fund transportation projects.

"Two-thirds of our funding comes from local dollars," says Audrey Noda who handles local government affairs. "The effort of Government Relations to generate that level of support has proven to be very important to the success of those projects."

"Building a comprehensive transportation system is not like paving a road or filling a pothole," says Sohikian. "It's a complex process that will take billions of dollars.

"When MTA speaks to Congress, it's acting as the primary advocate for the 6.5 million people who drive their cars to work in the Los Angeles region every day, the 1 million people who will board Metro Buses, and the 125,000 boarding passengers on Metro Rail and commuter rail," says Sohikian. "That's why our efforts during the reauthorization of ISTEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991) are so important."

As bills make their way through the State Legislature, Government Relations sends out "Legislative Alerts."

"We send the alerts to our contractors, chambers of commerce, city elected officials and League of Cities officials in hopes of quickly generating letters to Sacramento," says Claudette Moody who handles state government affairs. "It's not something we invented. It's a common technique in government relations.

"This legislative session we'll track 200 of the hundreds of bills in Sacramento dealing with transportation issues," says Moody. "Eight bills involve the MTA specifically, and four of those deal with the structure of the MTA Board of Directors."

While relationships are important in developing support for the MTA, they're not everything.

"Just because you know somebody doesn't mean you'll be effective in this kind of work," adds Acevedo-Franco.

"Knowing people is only part of what we do. Our job also calls for being creative in researching and in some instances even writing proposed legislation. We have to determine the implications of law if we're to come up with well-written policies."

Department

"It's not an easy job," says Sohikian. "More than 50 percent of the members of Congress who voted on ISTEA in 1991 are no longer holding those positions. That means we constantly have to re-educate Congress about the issues."

Term limits are creating a similar effect here in California, making the work of Government Relations even more important as elected officials, many of whom who have little historical knowledge about transportation issues, attempt to make informed decisions.

To be successful, Government Relations must convince elected officials and the public that transportation is a fundamental part of life in America. "It puts food on the table because it's about work," says Acevedo-Franco.

"Transportation accounts for 17 percent of the Gross National Product," says Sohikian. "And to stay competitive in this global economy, LA County must continue to build a world class transportation system."



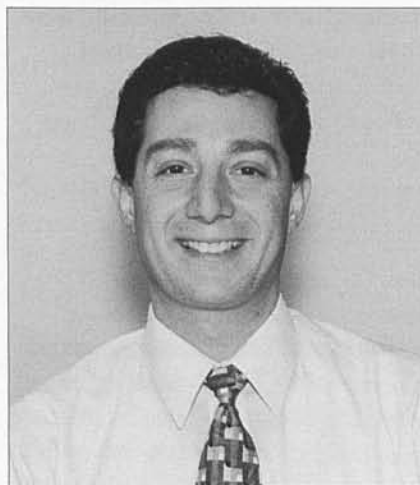
Gisselle Acevedo-Franco



Claudette Moody



Audrey Noda



Arthur Sohikian

Los Angeles
County
Metropolitan
Transportation
Authority

MTA Gateway is a Winner

8

Best

Interior

Design

Outstanding

Architectural

Design

MTA'S GATEWAY BUILDING AND TRANSIT PLAZA WIN TWO TOP ARCHITECTURAL/DESIGN AWARDS

The MTA's new Gateway Transit Center headquarters building near Union Station has received the *Calibre Award* from the Southern California chapter of the International Interior Design Association (IIDA) for best interior design.

One Gateway Plaza received the *Kaufman & Broad Award* from the Los Angeles Business Council (LABC) for best outstanding project which has contributed to the beautification of the Los Angeles area.

The IIDA is the largest organization for the interior design profession with over 9,500 members. Its mission is to enhance the quality of life through excellence in interior design and to advance interior design through knowledge.

In presenting the award, the IIDA recognized MTA for epitomizing the best in clients through its support for increased public awareness of the importance of good quality design of the MTA headquarters building.

The LABC honored MTA by presenting One Gateway Plaza with its distinguished Kaufman & Broad award for outstanding architectural design.

The Union Station Gateway Transit Center was designed by Ehrenkrantz and Eckstut architects of Los Angeles. In addition to the MTA headquarter building, it consists of the Patsaouras Transit Plaza and the East Portal providing access to Union Station, Metro Red Line trains, Metrolink, Amtrak and a 2,100-space parking facility for commuters and workers.

Development of the headquarters building and accompanying transit center was overseen by the Union Station Gateway Board of Directors. The 26-story, 628,000 square foot headquarters building was designed by the architectural firm of McLarand, Vasquez & Partners of Costa

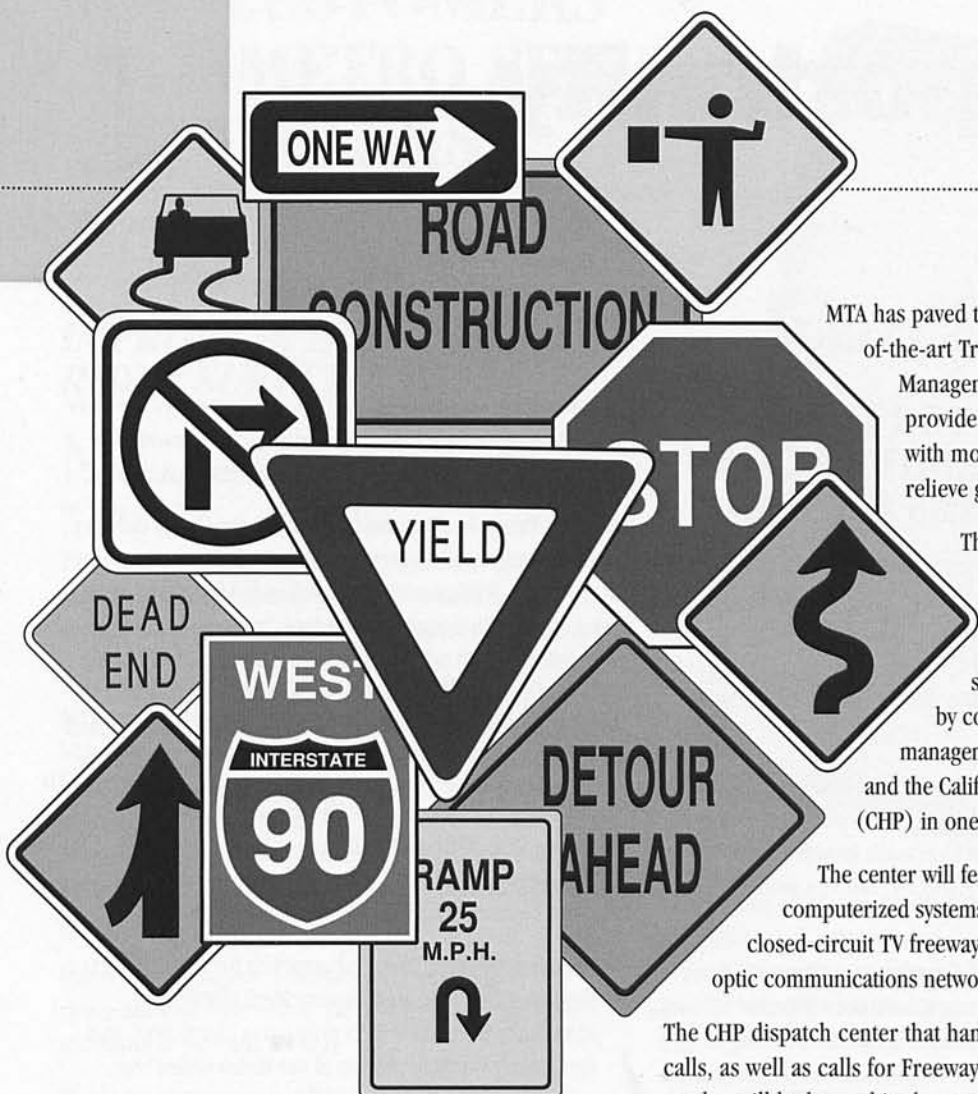
Mesa. The project was built by Charles Pankow Builders of Altadena and jointly developed by the MTA and Catellus Development Corporation, Los Angeles.

"We are all very proud of these two distinguished awards and the recognition for our new headquarters building and transit plaza," said MTA Interim CEO Linda Bohlinger.



The Gateway Transit Center just received two awards that recognize the superior design of the facility.

me Gateway Plaza



**MTA LENDS
SUPPORT FOR NEW
TRANSPORTATION
NERVE CENTER TO
HELP BREAK
GRIDLOCK ON LA
FREEWAYS**

MTA has paved the way for a new state-of-the-art Transportation Management Center that will provide the Los Angeles region with more effective tools to relieve gridlock on the freeways.

The new center will allow for greater communication and speedier response to situations on the freeways by consolidating the traffic management programs of Caltrans and the California Highway Patrol (CHP) in one location.

The center will feature upgraded computerized systems and an expanded closed-circuit TV freeway surveillance and fiber optic communications network.

The CHP dispatch center that handles Call Box and 911 calls, as well as calls for Freeway Service Patrol tow trucks, will be housed in the same facility with Caltrans' Transportation Management Center (TMC). The TMC monitors freeway traffic 24 hours a day in Los Angeles and Ventura counties. It will also serve as a central response center for any major disaster such as a large-scale earthquake.

In addition, the new center will be equipped with a multi-modal system interface that will allow all the transportation agencies in the region to link up directly with the TMC.

The MTA Board has authorized negotiations for a long-term lease agreement with Caltrans to locate a new transportation center on MTA property at Cesar Chavez Avenue and Lyon Street in the downtown Los Angeles area.

MTA has already awarded \$6.6 million to Caltrans to study and design the new facility. Architectural design work is currently underway on plans for a 65,000 square foot, three-to-four story building. Construction is scheduled to begin September 1998.

Los Angeles
County
Metropolitan
Transportation
Authority

Equal Opportunity

10

GENERAL MTA CONTRACTORS AWARD NEARLY 1-IN-4 SUBCONTRACTOR JOBS IN 1996 TO MINORITY/WOMEN SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

Small businesses owned by minorities and women received nearly \$76 million in contracts as a direct result of three MTA-administered programs in 1996, a figure which represents approximately 25 percent of all contract monies awarded that year, reports the agency's Equal Opportunity Programs Department.

In 1996, the MTA's Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) program established a goal of 23 percent to be earmarked for DBEs. The MTA actually awarded 24.8 percent of the funds, or \$75,700,193 out of a total of \$305,235,720.

Since the start of Metro Rail Construction, almost \$125 million in construction contracts have been awarded to women and minority-owned firms. As a result, during

construction of two segments of the Metro Red Line, hundreds of jobs have been created by the MTA for minorities and women.

These numbers obviously mean general contractors are more than living up to their end of the agreement made with the MTA to subcontract with women and minority-owned firms.

America Tang's Ace Fencing company in the City of Industry is a prime example of a small business given a major boost by the MTA's WBE program. According to Lima, Peru-born Tang, her firm has received contracts from the MTA totaling approximately \$6 million since 1989, or 21 percent of her firm's total revenues. "Take away the WBE program and 15 employees (mainly Hispanic) on my present 30-person staff would lose their \$40,000-a-year jobs," she said.

"Unlike other organizations with similar programs, the MTA has made DBE, WBE and MBE accessible for people to really participate in," said Tang, who purchased the 48-year-old company in 1988 with her partner, Peter Ng.

Ace Fencing has been awarded contracts for such projects as the Metro Red Line Maintenance Yard (\$930,000), emergency fencing for MTA properties (\$400,000) and the Century Freeway portion of the Metro Green Line.

"The MTA tries to award 23 cents of each dollar to a minority firm compared with the goal of 10 percent established by other public and private sector organizations," said Equal Opportunity Director Gail Charles. "The fact that we exceeded our goals is very encouraging. It means contractors are looking for qualified subcontractors regardless of race and that their commitment goes beyond just achieving a goal."

To qualify for the program minority contractors or sub-contractors must own and control a firm, or 51 percent of a corporation, and their revenues cannot average more than \$16.6 million in a three-year period, she noted.

"Even though Southern California has been mired in a sluggish economy many start-up small businesses owned by minorities and women have managed to flourish as a result of these various MTA programs," Charles said. "The MTA will continue to emphasize the importance of these programs in the future by diligently monitoring the high standards of compliance we've established."

MTA



MTA CUSTOMERS GIVE METRO SERVICE HIGH MARKS

....BUT ITEMIZE WAYS TO IMPROVE IN EXTENSIVE RIDER SURVEY

Nearly two-thirds of Metro Bus riders and almost 90% of Metro Rail riders rate Metro service as generally 'good' or 'very good.'

They also list specific areas for improvements, and a majority (50%) indicate they think the overall quality of service will improve over the next two years.

That is according to a preliminary report from an extensive MTA survey of 55,000 riders and non-riders compiled from May through December last year. The survey covered all Metro Bus and Metro Rail lines, 103 municipal bus lines, as well as telephone home surveys. In addition, the MTA rider questionnaires were prepared in Spanish, Chinese and Korean as well as English, resulting in important input from these communities.

Metro Bus riders were generally pleased with the convenience of their routes, the courtesy of the operators and sense of personal security.

They were more critical of time spent waiting for a bus, cleanliness, crowding and the cost of the fare. When asked what improvements they would like to see, Metro Bus riders asked for faster and more frequent service, more vehicles, more buses on time and buses that are cleaner inside.

The biggest complaints from Metro Rail riders were the clarity of the public address announcements and crowding on the Metro Blue Line. When asked how they would like to improve the Metro Rail System, riders mentioned more comfort and expanded service.

Metro Rail riders gave high marks to cleanliness on the trains, as well as convenience, security and the travel time when compared to travel by automobile.

Nearly two-thirds of the Metro Bus riders who responded to the on-board survey indicated they had no other way to travel. But Metro Rail riders are more likely to be riders of choice. Sixty percent said they used the trains because they were convenient. Further, more than two-thirds of Metro Rail riders are minorities.

A survey of former riders indicated most (88%) of them stopped using public transit because they started driving themselves.



"The results of this survey will help us to examine our policies and to look for ways to form a better match between our services and the needs of our customers," said Interim MTA CEO Linda Bohlinger. "We are pleased that the majority of Metro riders give good overall marks to our service, but we are working on ways to improve it."

Besides compiling the opinions of riders, the survey also sought information on what routes they took throughout the city when they used public transit.

"This survey provides us with up-to-date information on how people actually use public transit, what routes they take and what detours they may have to make," said Ellen Levine, Executive Officer for Operations. "The needs of customers constantly evolve, whether it's because their jobs move, new shopping areas are built or schools change their operations. We always try to keep on top of those changes and the results of this survey will allow us to more finely tune the schedules and routes to match the real time needs of our customers."

This survey is actually the first phase of an extensive countywide project called the Service Planning Market Research project that will continue through the year 2000. The project is an effort to become more customer-driven. "The survey will really help us shape the region's future transportation system to ensure that the MTA remains competitive and customer-focused," said Bohlinger.

Los Angeles

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Metropolitan

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MTA BOARD GIVES METRO FREEWAY SERVICE PATROL A BIG BOOST

12
About
1,300
major
incidents
occur
on
our
freeways
annually



The MTA Board recently approved two recommendations that assist the Metro Freeway Service Patrol and ease congestion on freeways.

The MTA Board has approved two recommendations that will ease congestion on clogged Los Angeles County freeways and enhance the successful Metro Freeway Service Patrol.

The first action authorizes MTA staff to purchase 20 portable field offices, also known as Portable Incident Command Packages (PIC-PACs). The goal: clear major accidents from the freeway faster and improve communications between the MTA and the California Highway Patrol (CHP). The CHP will test four of the suitcases-on-wheels this summer.

Contained in the suitcases are a computer, fax, cellular telephone, digital camera and other equipment. CHP officers responding to the scene of an accident will be able to print route diversion maps and simultaneously transmit pictures to various agencies so that the right equipment and personnel can be deployed.

"Not only has the Metro Freeway Service Patrol helped more than 1.3 million stranded Los Angeles freeway drivers since 1991 by providing free gas, a quick repair and/or towing, it has just as importantly reduced the impact any one accident may have on the freeway system," said Interim MTA CEO Linda Bohlinger.

"With this success in mind," continued Bohlinger, "the Board's action in awarding a \$400,000 contract to EIGER

Tech Systems can only improve something that is already working very well. It is calculated that Metro Freeway Service saves drivers and passengers \$264 million a year in time, which instead of being spent sitting in traffic, now can be used for more productive purposes."

The PIC-PAC units have been used successfully by the U.S. Department of Transportation, FEMA, 14 major oil and chemical companies and about 50 public safety agencies throughout the United States.

In a separate but related item, the Board awarded nearly \$10 million in contracts to 10 tow truck companies. The new contract's average hourly rate is 3.2 percent below current ones.

The Metro Freeway Service Patrol program consists of 41 tow truck assignments covering over 400 miles of congested freeways Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. on all freeways (10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on most), Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Friday and Saturday from 7 p.m. to 3 a.m. The service is paid for by Proposition C and state gas tax funds.

"Los Angeles County has the worst freeway congestion in the nation," Bohlinger said. "About 1,300 major incidents, lasting approximately three hours each, occur on our freeways annually, and the tow truck service is taking a significant bite out of these delays."

Pre-construction on Metro Red Line Subway...

ENABLING RELOCATED EAST LA RESIDENTS TO OWN HOMES FOR FIRST TIME

It's always tough to move.

As East Los Angeles residents begin relocating from acquired homes located near four planned subway stations, the MTA realizes being sensitive is just as important as distributing 42-month rental assistance checks, which can be used as down payments on homes.

Sensitivity is also just as important as finding residents adequate replacement housing - a household cannot be relocated from a property in disrepair to similar conditions.

"Residents sincerely love East LA and what it has meant to them," said MTA Public Affairs Representative Luis Hernandez. "There is an emotional bond. Many of these families have lived in the same apartments and homes for well over 20 years...there's a cultural attachment. Separating yourself from local merchants and friends is very emotional."

By the year 2004, when the East LA Red Line Extension to First and Lorena streets is complete, the subway will serve as a bridge, if you will, to jobs once thought out of the transportation loop for thousands of East Los Angeles residents. However, it's the present the MTA and East LA residents are most concerned with.

Typically, in the beginning, people do not want to move, report staff in the MTA's Real Estate Services Department. But as a growing number of residents are discovering, their quality of life improves.

For instance, take the case of single-parent mom Catalina Hernandez and her three children. For 22 years, home was a 350-square-foot duplex - her sons slept in the living room. The family decided to use the 42-month supplemental lump sum rent check provided by the MTA as a down payment on a home in Bell. Ironically, it is located on a tree-lined street named Mayflower Avenue.

The reality of living in larger and more pleasant accommodations hasn't quite sunk in for Hernandez, 58. The family now lives in a comparatively palatial three-bedroom, one-bath home that includes a large backyard with an orange tree, a two-car garage and sits on a 6,000-square-foot lot with room to spare for add-ons.

"It's a dream come true, thank God," says Catalina, who served carne asada during a weekend housewarming fiesta. "It will cost a little bit more but I am willing to make the sacrifice in order to meet my financial obligations."

The real estate agent who showed them the property says it was love at first sight. "Automatic, right away, everyone agreed," says Francisco Gomez of Century 21.

Gilma Reyes, husband Samuel and five sons also love East LA, but not enough to trade in their first home in Carson, accessed via security gates and situated on a clean, pothole-free street. The home features three bedrooms, built-in wooden cabinetry, a large bathtub and measures 1,700 square feet.

"It's bigger and prettier than the tiny apartment in East LA we lived in for 27 years," says Gilma. "We could not have done this without the assistance of the MTA. Coming up with a down payment would have been impossible. It was a very good experience, very pleasant."

One of Gilma's sons, Alex, 18, shares his parents' enthusiasm. "I am very happy that my parents finally own a home," he says.

Treating people like human beings, and not like statistics, is the key to helping people adjust as quickly as possible to a pending relocation, says the MTA's Lynn Bell-Orona of Real Estate Services.

"Listening to what they have to say and offering assistance without being overwhelming is essential," Bell-Orona, a senior real estate officer, points out. "Also very important is explaining all of their options and limitations."

Typical concerns, says Bell-Orona, include: "Who's going to help me?" "What if I cannot find another home or apartment?" "Which school will my children attend?" and "The new apartment is not close enough to my doctor, what will I do?"

"You need to be very sensitive to the fact you're displacing someone, that you, on behalf of the MTA are making them move," Bell-Orona continued. "I put myself in their place and ask 'How would I react?'"

Families like the Reyeses and Hernandezes are benefiting from the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisitions Policies Act of 1970, which the MTA strictly abides by.

A
growing
number of
residents are
discovering
their
quality of life
improves

AGENCY CELEBRATES 4TH ANNIVERSARY

14

Honoring
the
past
and
embracing
the
future



The MTA recently celebrated its 4th anniversary with a special celebration designed to “honor the past and embrace the future.” Employees enjoyed historical displays, entertainment and a birthday cake. Employees also contributed to a time capsule that will be opened in the year 2020.

MTA HELPS 15 MAJOR LA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS RECEIVE CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION FUNDS

The MTA has helped 15 Los Angeles County transportation projects receive nearly 22 percent of all funding offered by a state transportation improvement program.

The California Transportation Commission (CTC) has voted to award \$22.4 million in 1997/98 Transit Capital

Improvement (TCI) Program funds to such area mass transit projects as Metro Blue and Red Line stations, Metrolink railroad rolling stock purchases and railroad access improvements to Burbank Airport. A total of \$100 million was distributed statewide, compared to only \$12.5 million in 1996/1997.

In September, long before the CTC decision, the MTA encouraged local agencies, cities and the county to submit applications, which were then assigned a priority ranking by the MTA's Planning Department. An MTA Board member presented the MTA's recommendations to the CTC in March.

“When you consider CTC reviews nearly 200 applications annually and only 25 to 50 projects receive TCI funds, to have 15 MTA-sponsored projects approved is very gratifying,” said Interim MTA CEO Linda Bohlinger.

Crenshaw Connection

MTA EXPANDS SERVICE ON LINE 608 “CRENSHAW CONNECTION” TO INCLUDE SATURDAYS

The “Crenshaw Connection,” a new flexible bus service serving the residential areas of Leimert Park as well as the Crenshaw Baldwin Hills Plaza, now operates on Saturdays between 7:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. Passengers may board at bus stops or flag a bus to pick them up at any safe corner served by the line. Passengers also may be dropped off at any safe corner in the service area.

The service, Line 608, is being operated under contract to the MTA by APT Senior Ride Non-Profit, Inc.

Shuttle buses on the line operate every 30 minutes. The fare is 25 cents and Metro monthly bus passes and transfers are honored.

The “Crenshaw Connection” is a flexible bus line generally serving 39th Street on the north, Budlong Avenue on the east, Marlton Avenue on the west and 54th Street on the south. The service will continue to operate Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

For specific information or to request service, patrons can call 213-299-3980.

“Many of the organizations we help are not as familiar as the MTA is with the various nuances contained in these quite complex applications,” continued Bohlinger. “We help them make their cases for funding much stronger. After all, we are the region’s designated transportation steward and perform this type of activity on a daily basis.”

The following four projects were among those directly proposed by the MTA and will result in:

- Passengers traveling a shorter distance between the Pasadena Blue Line Chinatown Station and civic plaza to the bus, shuttle, taxi and DASH on Broadway by providing access over what is now private property - \$500,000.
- An 1,100-space parking lot and bus loading facility at the Metro Red Line station at Westlake/MacArthur Park - \$1.1 million.

- New signage and better access to Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport - \$1.7 million.
- The purchase of 14 additional cars for the Metrolink system - \$5.3 million.

Also receiving funding were the cities of Los Angeles, Covina, Commerce, Monterey Park and Santa Clarita, as well as Foothill Transit and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works.

The actual cost to complete the 15 projects is approximately \$80 million, with the balance to be made up by various cities’ local general funds and Proposition C sales tax revenues.

Los Angeles
County
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CITY OF LOS ANGELES HONORS MTA STAFF FOR WORK IN HOLLYWOOD



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Joan Caterino
Editor

Al Moore
Manager, Printing Services

Steve Jost
Photographer

Mike Barnes
Manager, Marketing

Warren Morse
Marketing Director

Rae James
*Executive Officer,
Customer Services
& Communications*



*Charles Stark was honored by the Los Angeles City
Council for his work with the Hollywood community.*

The City of Los Angeles recently honored MTA staff for their "outstanding work" in Hollywood.

Charles Stark, interim MTA Executive Officer for Construction, was acknowledged for his "intelligence and leadership" in helping produce what was called a "win-win solution for the Hollywood community, taxpayers and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority."

The commendations honored an arrangement with businesses and property owners in Hollywood allowing longer hours of construction which will ultimately shorten the construction schedule by several months and save the public at least \$3 million. The agreement followed extensive discussion with the community.

The City also honored Stephen Sawyer, Senior Public Affairs Officer for Metro Red Line Construction, for his "creativity, perspicacity and perseverance in finding a win-win solution that gives fair compensation to Hollywood Boulevard merchants, shortens construction time and generates savings for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority."

"We are working to keep open lines of communication with the community," said Interim MTA CEO Linda Bohlinger. "We are pleased to see this recognition for MTA staff who have worked hard and continue to work hard to meet the needs of the community."

*Metropolitan
Transportation Authority
One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2932*

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