

Massive Traffic Problems Forecast for L.A. Olympics

By KENNETH REICH, Times Staff Writer

Police, California Highway Patrol and Los Angeles city transportation officials involved in Olympic planning gave a somber assessment Wednesday of traffic problems expected during the 1984 games, telling a City Council committee that the Coliseum area, Westwood and Long Beach will be particularly congested.

The testimony prompted Councilwoman Pat Russell, head of the Transportation and Traffic Committee, to advise Los Angeles residents that unless they have a positive attitude toward the games, it would be "a good time for them to take a vacation."

Another committee member, Councilman Marvin Braude, said he believes that it would be a mistake "to create the impression that Los Angeles can solve all its transportation problems during the Olympics."

The committee hearing overshadowed an announcement by the private Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee that after more than two years of negotiations, it had signed an \$18.5-million contract with a Japanese network consortium that will televise the games in Japan. The final price represented a compromise that both sides termed satisfactory.

At the Council committee hearing, Los Angeles Police Cmdr.

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William Rathburn, head of the LAPD Olympic planning unit, expressed concern that the Olympic committee has fallen behind in its traffic planning. It is "making progress," he said, but "it has a lot of catching up to do."

Capt. Ken Rude, head of the CHP's Olympic planning unit, said traffic jams in the Coliseum area during the games may be so severe that some motorists may abandon their cars on the freeway. A good towing system will be necessary, he said.

Later, responding to suggestions by Olympic committee aides that he had been speaking facetiously, Rude said he had not been. Such things have actually happened at big rock concerts, he said.

"We had to cut the fences to pull cars off the freeway."

Some Streets to Be Closed

Donald Howery, general manager of the city's transportation department, said that during the games, the city will close Jefferson Boulevard between Vermont Avenue and Figueroa Street, and Figueroa and Flower streets are likely to be made one-way streets between 11th Street and Exposition Boulevard.

Howery said that 140,000 people are likely to be at the Coliseum on July 28, 1984 for the opening ceremonies—90,000 spectators, 20,000 participants and 30,000 people outside the stadium, attracted to the area by the excitement. Rathburn agreed with that estimate.

Such record crowds will necessitate special bus shuttle services to allow people to park their cars miles away from the Coliseum and still get there, Howery said. He said that the Coca-Cola Co. has been exploring subsidizing such shuttles from the Century Freeway right of way and Hollywood Park in exchange for the advertising it would get out of it.

Under questioning by Braude, George McDonald, the Olympic committee's transportation coordinator, listed the Coliseum area, Westwood and Long Beach as posing the most serious traffic congestion problems. As for the Coliseum, he said, "We feel if we can solve that one, we can solve the rest."

McDonald said the Olympic committee is assuming responsibility for transporting athletes, Olympic officials, the press and Olympic workers during the games. But he said that transporting general spectators, the regular ticket holders, "clearly is not the Olympic committee's responsibility."

Some time ago, Olympic officials had indicated they would assume some such responsibility.

After the hearing was over, some Olympic committee officials complained that Councilwoman Russell had not given them much advance warning of the hearing or explained very comprehensively the subject matter.

Asked about this, Russell said she had tried to notify the committee well in advance, but until Friday her calls had not been returned.



