



June 2, 1995

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR TREE PLANTING PROJECT IN SYLMAR**

Tree planting volunteers are needed to join the MTA and the Los Angeles Conservation Corps in the creation of the Northeast San Fernando Valley Greenway Project, adjacent to the Metrolink tracks.

The project involves the planting of trees and groundcover along 12.2 miles of the Metrolink Line from Buena Vista Street to Balboa Boulevard. The project will beautify the communities of Burbank, Sun Valley, Pacoima, San Fernando, Granada Hills and Sylmar.

**Volunteers may show up Saturday, June 10, 1995, at 9 a.m., at the Metrolink Station in Sylmar - 12219 North First Street.**

ANY QUESTIONS?

Call the MTA (213) 244-6149 or LACC (213) 749-3601

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(SPECIAL TO STAKEHOLDER MAGAZINE)

## **BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES STILL PLENTIFUL AT MTA**

**By FRANKLIN E. WHITE**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

It's been a little over two years now since the birth of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA). Like so many other organizations, both public and private, it has faced its share of the economic problems that so far have been a fixture of the 1990s. And yet, opportunity remains the watchword for those wishing to participate in the agency's recently adopted 20-year long range plan.

The sea we've been navigating has been stormy ever since we set sail as a new agency back in April, 1993. But MTA has an extremely dedicated staff and a board of directors who have shown they can work together despite their differences and competing interests.

Because of them, bright rays of sunshine are breaking through the clouds, helping to show us the way to the future. And as far as I can tell, there is fair weather ahead.

MTA has a well-defined vision for transportation in the next two decades. It is detailed in the recently adopted 20-Year Transportation Plan. As business owners and entrepreneurs, you can help us achieve our goals. This article will get you started on how to participate in helping us get there. The opportunities are there, and they will remain plentiful in the foreseeable future.

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Before we discuss the nuts and bolts of our training programs and contracting procedures, a thorough understanding of the 20-Year Plan is in order. It's a good idea to become familiar with it, because it is what all of our activities will be based on in the coming years.

The budget vise is squeezing the MTA hard. I'm sure this is not news to anyone who owns or works for a public or private business. It seems that all of us who call Southern California our home have been affected in some degree by the recession. Maybe you've had to put some projects on the back burner for a while. Maybe you've had to take the painful step of laying off some of your people. Maybe you've been one of those people who got a pink slip.

At MTA, we've been forced to come to grips with all of these -- and more. When government subsidies seemed limitless back in the '80s, Los Angeles County was given a \$183 billion transportation plan that covered 30 years. Lots of elected officials all around Los Angeles County were happy, because it seemed to have something for everybody.

Then the 1990s arrived, along with a locomotive-sized reality check. The government help we had leaned on for so long gave way, forcing us to find other ways to prop ourselves back up.

The MTA now faces a monumental task, one it has been grappling with ever since it was created. We must streamline ourselves to spend taxpayer dollars wisely. But we also must move forward aggressively to build a transportation network that will be needed by future citizens of Los Angeles County. We don't have the luxury of deciding which one we'd like to do. We must achieve both.

Last February, the MTA Board of Directors took what I believe was its most courageous and significant action since being formed two years ago. It set aside partisan squabbles and regional interests long enough to approve a fiscally

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responsible, achievable long-range transportation plan that is in the best interest of the county as a whole.

The plan isn't perfect. It doesn't please everybody -- especially those who thought they were getting new bus or train service, only to have it postponed for a while.

What it does do is put forth an integrated, multi-modal transportation system meant to serve the most people -- period. It does not suggest building new rail systems because we think they're glamorous, and it doesn't suggest flooding our system with buses just because some think rail systems are too expensive.

The new plan calls for spending of about \$72 billion over 20 years. This may sound like a lot of money, and it is. But it's a lot less than \$183 billion the original 30-year plan called for. The relatively lean amount of \$72 billion will require judicious money management, with a keen eye always focused on the bottom line.

Here are some of the things the plan calls for in the coming years:

- It recommends adding 300 buses regionwide.
- In addition to the rail lines we're already committed to building, we will build an east-west San Fernando Valley line, and red line extensions to Westwood and eastward to Atlantic Boulevard.
- We'll expand the high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane network, including one on the busy Golden State Freeway between Route 134 and the San Bernardino Freeway.

These are the key bus and rail elements of the plan. But there's much more you may not be aware of, much of which will require the help of outside contractors:

- We want to alleviate crowding on some of our most heavily-used bus lines. We will do this by taking buses from low-ridership lines and putting them on

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our heaviest lines. This will help lines such as our Wilshire Boulevard line that carries nearly 60,000 riders every day. This one line has some of the highest ridership in the country.

- Recognizing the community's need for specialized transportation service, we will provide shuttle service, subscription service, shared-ride taxis and jitneys where appropriate.
- We'll eliminate bus lines that follow the same essential route of rail lines, and put those buses instead on crowded lines that need them, and on routes that connect with rail lines.
- We're going to add 130 miles of arterial bus lanes on major surface streets. Anyone familiar with downtown Los Angeles has probably noticed that on Spring Street, there is a special lane just for buses. This is an example of an arterial bus lane. Buses can be held up in traffic just like cars, unless we give them special treatment. The more arterial bus lanes we can provide, the faster and more efficient bus service will be, especially in very congested areas.
- I'm sure everyone has experienced the aggravation of seeing a string of traffic lights stretching down a busy street, and having every one turn red before you can get through the intersection. You'll be pleased to know our plan address this annoyance as well. We're going to better synchronize our signals along major thoroughfares so that the string of signals stays greener longer.
- We also intend to continue our commitment to the Alameda Corridor Project. This project is crucial to the economic well-being of Los Angeles County. It will bring new life to the freight rail corridor stretching from the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach to all major centers of commerce in the county, not to mention the rest of the country.

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Our rail construction projects already have done wonders for our local economy. Ever since we broke ground for the Metro Red Line subway system back in 1986, tens of thousands have been kept on the job performing the huge variety of tasks that are needed for such a complex project. If you're wondering about opportunity, just listen to a partial list of the kind of skills we will be seeking in the next two decades: engineers, urban planners, designers, artists, archaeologists, architects, tunnel diggers, cement pourers, welders, mechanics of all kinds, police officers, computer technicians, and computer programmers.

We will have an especially high demand for engineers. All our major construction projects are dependent upon the best engineering knowledge available. We want their expertise, ideas and creativity.

In fact, we're recruiting right now for up to 50 engineers and management people. They will work in our rail construction unit in our newly formed quality assurance and safety assurance divisions. The people we hire will do construction site inspections and safety control. These are vital functions to assure the safety and reliability of our construction program. The recruitment is nationwide, and all are invited to participate.

A lot of the initial engineering work for our rail construction program is done by a consortium of firms called the engineering management consultant, or EMC. These firms do all the geotechnical, right-of-way, architectural, mechanical and design work on the rail system. They actually have an outreach program of their own which they call the "STEPS" program.

And the rail projects aren't the only ones needing expertise. Business owners interested in bidding on MTA projects should be on MTA's bid list if you specialize in environmental work, for example. Our contracts office issues a bid list

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each month that lists contracts available for bids. Your first call should be to Cary Peck in our Vendor Relations office at (213) 972-5130. He can answer your questions, and get you on our mailing list for a newsletter that details contracts we expect in the coming months, even before they are formally opened for bids.

Since MTA will be around for the long term, we also concern ourselves with where the next generation of skilled workers will come from. There is a vast manpower potential now attending our Los Angeles County schools. These young men and women represent the next wave of skilled workers who will be primed to step in about the time we begin enjoying our retirement.

MTA realizes that this potential exists. We are doing our part to provide our talented young people an opportunity to learn more about what MTA is all about, and how they might participate in the future.

We call it our Career Development and Training Center. Our Human Resources staff offers several programs designed to give high schoolers, college students and even teachers a chance for some hands-on instruction in the skills that the transportation industry will be needing for many more years.

For college and university students, we have the Administrative Internship Program. This is meant to help recruit, train and develop college students' skills to prepare them for a professional job at the entry level. There are some rules the student has to follow, and they have to keep their grades up to participate. But for students who are serious about their career paths, MTA can provide them with an excellent opportunity.

One of our newer programs that has proven very successful so far is the Transportation Careers Academy Program, or "T-CAP". This program is a "school within in school." At the moment, there are three high schools participating from the Los Angeles Unified School District, which is helping MTA sponsor the program.

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The T-CAP program is very important, not only for the career training it can provide, but for the strong message it delivers to high schoolers who may be wondering what their futures hold. Our message is: if you want to be successful, stay in school. If you do, then MTA can help you find a path and stay on it as you seek a higher education.

We have another program that can help students find a vocation in the transportation industry. We call it the Transportation Occupations Program, or "TOP". This program has been very successful over the last nine years. We've provided job training to more than 250 students, a lucky few of whom are actually working for us now in full-time jobs.

"TOP" students do more than just go to class. Wherever possible, we help get them placed in summer internships with contractors, consultants or in our offices where they can get a feel for what it's like to use their skills in a professional setting.

To support these programs, we also have formed our transportation teaching institute. We welcome the participation of any professional in the institute, which is a group of industry professionals who volunteer their time and service to our other career development programs.

Volunteering to help the teaching institute doesn't have to mean a big time investment. It can be as simple as providing a resource telephone number, a tour idea, or a business contact. This kind of "networking" can't help but pay dividends to all of us in the long run.

These are just a few of the many program we're involved in. We run these programs, not only because we believe in the valuable resource represented by our youth, but because it's clearly in our best interest as well. If we help train a future designer, planner or construction worker, and that person eventually begins work

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on one of our projects, we have helped someone get a job, we've helped ourselves get a qualified worker, and we've contributed to the health of our economy.

Armed with the vision contained in our 20-year plan, we are confident that 20 years from now -- and well beyond that -- our transportation system will be the centerpiece of a city that can -- and should -- still be looked upon by the rest of the nation with envy. By participating, you'll know you helped make it that way again.

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