



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

METRO BUS SERVICE EXPANSION AIMED AT GETTING L.A. COUNTY'S TRANSIT DEPENDENT RIDERS TO JOBS, SCHOOLS AND HEALTH CENTERS

The going will get easier for thousands of transit dependent people traveling to jobs, schools and medical facilities when the first phase of the Metro Bus Pilot Project Master Plan goes into effect December 14, 1997.

The MTA Board of Directors has given the go ahead for a series of bus service startups and expansions, as well as the addition of 67 buses into service, during peak hours on 12 Metro Bus lines operating in various areas of L.A. County. The master plan is among the service improvements outlined in the Consent Decree of 1996 in which MTA agreed to provide new and expanded service including at least 50 buses during peak hours.

"The MTA is committed to meeting the goals of the Consent Decree," said Los Angeles Mayor and MTA Board Chairman Richard J. Riordan. "The county's transit dependent people deserve the best service we're able to provide them, and this is another important step in fulfilling that mission."

The master plan was developed as the result of a series of community meetings sponsored by MTA and the Bus Riders Union (BRU) which were held between June and September 1997. During the meetings, more frequent service, as well as an increase in the span of operation of existing service, was advocated by members of the public. The board considered the master plan in October 1997 and in November approved implementation of Phase I.

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The Phase I service additions and expansions will be introduced over a two month period beginning on December 14, 1997, with the exception of Line 604 (operated by LADOT) which began service in June 1997 following the mutual agreement of the members of the Joint Working Group (MTA and BRU) and board approval.

The board has directed operations planners to return in Spring 1998 with a proposal for Phase II of the Pilot Plan which will include recommendations for service expansion on additional lines for which operators are being sought through a competitive solicitation. At a minimum, the board has directed that Phase II include the startup of a new limited stop bus service (Line 305) to connect South Central Los Angeles with the Westside.

Service on the 12 lines in Phase I is divided among five carriers including MTA, Laidlaw/Charterway, ATE/Ryder, LADOT and Transportation Concepts.

Promotional fares will be offered on all of these services for a trial period. Details on the special fare program will be made available prior to startup. Passengers also will be able to obtain information on the service changes and promotional fares a few weeks prior to startup of each service by calling 1-800-COMMUTE. Brochures detailing the changes will be available on Metro buses in the affected areas.

The Phase I additions and service expansions include:

Line 108 (Slauson Avenue) -- Beginning December 14, 1997, MTA will extend its operation of Line 108 to the Citadel Shopping Center in the City of Commerce.

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Line 601 -- Union/Echo Park Shuttle -- Beginning on December 22, 1997, this new City of Los Angeles DASH community shuttle will operate between the Echo Park/Westlake area and downtown Los Angeles. The primary streets served by the line will include Echo Park Avenue, Union Avenue, and Washington Boulevard with connections to the Metro Blue Line at the Grand Avenue Station and the Metro Red Line at the Westlake Station.

Line 602 -- El Sereno/City Terrace Shuttle -- Beginning December 22, 1997, this new City of Los Angeles Dash route will serve the community of El Sereno, providing connections to East Los Angeles on the south, while also serving City Terrace, El Sereno Junior High School, Wilson High School and Huntington Drive on the west.

Line 104 -- Weekend service will be added beginning in January 1998 and the line will be extended on its western end to the Garment District in downtown Los Angeles and to Fullerton Park 'n Ride on the line's eastern end. In addition, weekday service will be enhanced to operate every 30 minutes. The line operates through the City of Commerce, Montebello, Pico Rivera, Whittier and La Mirada. The line is operated by Laidlaw/Charterway under contract to MTA.

Line 167 -- As of January 1998, buses on Line 167, which operates from the Chatsworth Transportation Center to Studio City via Cal State Northridge and Kaiser Hospital, will run every 30 minutes instead of every hour, and in Panorama City the line will be rerouted via Chase Street and Van Nuys Boulevard to Roscoe Boulevard. The line is operated by Laidlaw/Charterway under contract to MTA.

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Line 205 -- Beginning in January 1998, Line 205, which links San Pedro to Willowbrook will be rerouted to provide a direct connection to the Artesia Harbor Transitway Station and to improve the range of transit options including transfers to lines 130, 444, and 445. Weekday service will be enhanced to operate every 20 minutes during peak hours with 40 minute headways during off peak hours and on weekends. The line is operated by ATE/Ryder under contract to MTA.

Line 422 -- Service on existing LADOT Express Line 423 through Newbury Park, Thousand Oaks, Calabasas and Woodland Hills to Encino Park & Ride will be augmented to include reverse commuter service during peak hours. Beginning in January 1998, reverse service will be added outbound during morning peak hours and inbound during afternoon peak hours.

Line 550 -- West Hollywood/San Pedro Express. Beginning in February 1998, MTA will inaugurate new express service connecting San Pedro and the harbor area with West Hollywood. Line 550 will operate via the Harbor Transitway to just south of USC and then via Exposition Boulevard, Western Avenue and San Vicente Boulevard to West Hollywood.

Line 550 will provide direct links to several hospitals including San Pedro Peninsula Hospital, Kaiser Hospital, Harbor General UCLA Hospital, and Cedars Sinai Medical Center. The line also will provide connections to the Metro Green Line at the Harbor/I-105 Station, and from several Harbor Transitway stations to their connecting east/west surface street bus lines. The line will operate seven days per week with 15-minute peak-hour service on weekdays, 30 minute service during off peak times, and 60 minute night service.

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Line 604 -- Vermont Avenue/Proposed Checkpoint Deviation Services --

The line began operating in June 1997 as the Vermont Shuttle. In September 1997, Line 604 was incorporated into the South Central Smart Shuttle Demonstration Project. It provides improved access to the neighborhood surrounding Vermont Avenue between Slauson Avenue and the Metro Green Line. The line is operated by LADOT.

Line 218 -- Beginning January 1998, this new line will use small buses to connect Studio City and West Hollywood via Laurel Canyon Boulevard. The line is operated by Transportation Concepts under contract with MTA.

Line 603 -- Rampart/Hoover Shuttle -- Starting in January 1998, this new community shuttle service will use smaller vehicles to service the Rampart/Hoover area of Los Angeles and the Glendale Galleria, with rail connections at the Metro Blue Line Grand Station and the Metro Red Line Westlake/MacArthur Park Station. The line will be operated by Transportation Concepts under contract with MTA.

Line 605 -- Beginning in January 1998, this new community shuttle service will provide service on Grande Vista Street, Lorena and Soto streets in Boyle Heights to L.A. County USC Medical Center. The line will be operated by Transportation Concepts under contract to MTA.

"The new and expanded routes in Phase I of the Pilot Plan will provide service to the people who depend on us to get to medical facilities, schools, and jobs," said Ellen Levine, MTA's executive officer for operations. "We want our passengers to know we're listening to them and that we'll continue to refine our service to meet their needs."

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