



# NEWS

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## TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE OF L.A. COUNTY RECEIVES MAJOR BOOST FROM MTA WITH INFUSION OF NEARLY \$251 MILLION

In an action taken Thursday, the MTA Board of Directors approved the allocation of \$250.7 million in special Call for Projects funding for 82 regionally significant transportation improvement projects. Over 243 project applications totaling **\$1.9 billion** were submitted by the 88 cities which comprise Los Angeles County, the County itself, Caltrans and the MTA.

Slated to receive federal funding are such projects as bikeways, transit centers, pedestrian improvements, freeway gap closures and carpool lanes, arterial widenings, signal synchronization and new bus and shuttle purchases.

The MTA Call for Projects program is usually held every two years, however, \$179.7 million in unanticipated gas tax funding for this special Call for Projects became available for Los Angeles County when Governor Gray Davis announced his Transportation 2000 Initiative last February and Assembly Bill 1012 was passed allowing the MTA to advance \$71 million from future Call for Projects.

The last regular Call for Projects was held in the spring of 1999 when the MTA programmed slightly more than \$500 million and approved 196 projects.

"The city and county of Los Angeles, as well as Caltrans, quickly responded to the MTA's request for applications," said Jim de la Loza, the MTA's Executive Officer for Countywide Planning and Development. "The unexpected windfall will make it possible for many of the cities to expand or start their projects now instead of having to wait."

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### Sample of projects include:

- \$5.4 million for the installation of safety quad gates at intersection grade crossings along the Metro Blue Line
- \$2.5 million for improvements to the congested 405-101 freeway interchange in the San Fernando Valley, including the addition of an auxiliary lane and widening of a lane connecting the two freeways.
- \$6.2 million for new westbound Route 134 on-ramp at Hollywood Way in Burbank.
- \$4.8 million to improve traffic signals at 59 intersections in Eagle Rock. The area is bounded by the Ventura, Pasadena, Golden State and Glendale freeways.
- \$1.9 million for pedestrian improvements at the under-construction Pasadena Blue Line stations.
- \$1 million to the city of Norwalk for the purchase of shuttles.
- \$1.4 million to the city of Santa Clarita for additional parking at the Newhall Metrolink Station.
- \$2.9 million for the construction of the Palmdale Transportation Center.
- \$3.2 million to city of Long Beach for the purchase of low-floor buses.
- \$931,000 to Los Angeles County Public Works Department for the installation of bus benches and shelters in three regions of Athens/Lennox, East Los Angeles and North County, which are unincorporated areas of L.A. County.

In August, the 82 approved projects will be transmitted by the Southern California Association of Governments to the California Transportation Commission for review and adoption in September and to the U.S. Department of Transportation in mid-2001.

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Guidelines for the year 2001 Call for Projects will be developed later this summer. Criteria used in evaluating applications include determining regional significance and project benefit, cost effectiveness, land use and environmental compatibility, project need, project readiness and benefit to the overall transportation system.

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