



NEWS

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BUS PROGRAM POISED FOR 24-LINE EXPANSION BEGINNING IN DECEMBER

METRO RAPID PROGRAM SELECTED AS SEMI-FINALIST IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY'S 2002 INNOVATIONS IN AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AWARDS

MTA's Metro Rapid bus program has been selected as a semifinalist in Harvard University's 2002 Innovations in American Government Awards. The awards recognize outstanding examples of creative problem solving in the public sector.

"We are honored to have been chosen as a semifinalist for this prestigious award," said MTA CEO Roger Snoble. "Metro Rapid has succeeded beyond anyone's expectations at meeting the needs of our existing passengers and generating new transit ridership on two busy L.A. corridors by producing an increase in bus speed unheard of in a major U.S. city."

Metro Rapid was launched in June 2000 with a 26-mile line on the Wilshire/Whittier corridor that operates from Santa Monica to Montebello via downtown Los Angeles, and a 16-mile line that operates on Ventura Boulevard from the Metro Red Line Universal City Station to Warner Center in the west San Fernando Valley.

Metro Rapid has succeeded in reducing travel times by nearly 30 percent and increasing total bus ridership in the two corridors by nearly 40 percent. One third of the ridership increase is patrons new to transit.

Buoyed by this success, the MTA Board earlier this year approved a 24-line expansion of Metro Rapid beginning this December with the startup of lines on Vermont Avenue and South Broadway. The expansion will be completed by 2008.

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Key to Metro Rapid's performance is the employment of a bus signal priority system designed by the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT), MTA's partner in the awards competition. The signal priority system reduces the time Metro Rapid buses sit at traffic signals by lengthening green signals and shortening red signals up to 10 seconds.

Other important attributes which contribute to Metro Rapid's success include the use of low-floor buses, the location of stations approximately 0.8 miles apart at major intersections similar to light rail service, and frequency-based scheduling.

The Innovations in American Government Award is a program of the Institute for Government Innovation in partnership with the Council for Excellence in Government. The Institute is funded through an endowment from the Ford Foundation. The Innovations Program tracks public innovation through frequent contact with practitioners and policy makers and through federal, state and local government conferences, public management research networks, media, and trade and public interest publications.

All levels of government — federal, state, local, tribal and territorial — within the United States are eligible for recognition and may submit applications. Each program is evaluated according to criteria including its novelty, the degree to which the program demonstrates a leap of creativity; its effectiveness, the degree in which the program has achieved tangible results; its significance, the degree to which the program successfully addresses an important problem of public concern; and its transferability, the degree to which the program, or aspects of it, shows promise of inspiring successful replication by other governmental entities.

Since it began in 1986, the annual competition has recognized 295 innovative programs and awarded them a total of \$17.9 million in grants.

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