



NEWS

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FIRST TWO LINES OF FIVE-YEAR, 24-LINE EXPANSION SLATED FOR DECEMBER 2002

MTA BOARD APPROVES ACCELERATION OF METRO RAPID BUS PROGRAM EXPANSION

The MTA Board of Directors today unanimously approved acceleration of the planned expansion of the Metro Rapid Bus Program whose two existing lines have reduced passenger travel times by approximately 25 percent. The 24-line expansion, which is slated to begin this December with new lines on Vermont Avenue and South Broadway, would be completed by 2008.

"The two Metro Rapid bus lines that have been in operation on the Wilshire/Whittier and Ventura Boulevard corridors for the last two years have been unqualified success stories," said Los Angeles City Councilmember and MTA Board Chairman Hal Bernson. "We are stepping up the expansion of Metro Rapid to bring the benefits of this innovative program to more L.A. County residents as soon as possible."

Today's action also included the MTA Board's earmarking of future regional funds to complete the expansion and authorization to MTA CEO Roger Snoble to negotiate and execute agreements with the local jurisdictions in each corridor so as to expedite deployment of the expansion plan.

Total one-time capital costs for implementing the entire program are estimated at \$110.5 million which will be used to construct 24 corridors with 356 miles of bus signal priority in 34 cities and 11 Los Angeles County unincorporated communities and to construct 779 stations, all with "next trip" displays. All funds have been reserved in the MTA's adopted Long Range Transportation Plan.

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The Metro Rapid Program was initiated in June 2000 with two demonstration lines on the 26-mile Wilshire/Whittier and 16-mile Ventura Boulevard corridors. Since that time, total bus ridership on the two corridors has increased by nearly 40 percent, with one third of the increase coming from passengers new to public transit.

Several key attributes have contributed to Metro Rapid's success including a bus signal priority system which reduces the amount of time a Metro Rapid bus is stopped by extending the length of green traffic signals and reducing the length of red traffic signals.

Other key attributes include the use of low-floor buses to reduce passenger boarding and alighting times, easy-to-recognize buses and stations featuring "next trip" displays and information kiosks, and "rail-like" operating characteristics. Similar to most light rail systems, Metro Rapid buses stop approximately every 0.8 miles at major cross streets as opposed to limited stop and local bus service in which buses stop approximately every 0.3 miles and 0.2 miles, respectively.

In addition to Vermont Avenue and South Broadway, the corridors selected for the five-year Metro Rapid expansion plan include Florence, Van Nuys, Soto, Crenshaw-Rossmore, Pico, Santa Monica, Hawthorne, Long Beach Ave., Hollywood-Fairfax-Pasadena, Western, Beverly, Vernon-La Cienega, Atlantic, Central, San Fernando-Lankershim, West Olympic, Garvey-Chavez, Manchester, San Fernando (south), Sepulveda (south), Torrance-Long Beach and Lincoln.

The expansion would add 356 miles to the existing Metro Rapid program, which consists of the 26-mile long Wilshire/Whittier and 16-mile long Ventura Boulevard corridors. It also would provide a net increase of 15,646 annual revenue hours over the pre-existing service levels in those corridors.

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The expansion plan was developed following a rigorous selection process to identify corridors where Metro Rapid service would best meet the needs of transit patrons. Corridors were evaluated on the basis of existing success, potential success and the need for transit.

The proposed span of Metro Rapid service was determined based on available revenue and recommends that six of the 24 Metro Rapid expansion corridors operate seven days a week, five operate weekdays and Saturdays, six operate all day on weekdays only, and seven operate during weekday peak periods only.

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