



February 28, 1996

Los Angeles County  
Metropolitan  
Transportation  
Authority

One Gateway Plaza  
Los Angeles, CA  
90012

213.922.6000

Mailing Address:  
P.O. Box 194  
Los Angeles, CA 90053

**TO: MTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**THROUGH: LINDA BOHLINGER**  
**FROM: JIM MCLAUGHLIN**  
**SUBJECT: LONG TERM BUS PLAN**

ISSUE

Several Board members have requested an overview of our vision for a long term plan to improve bus service in Los Angeles County. The following provides what we believe is an implementable vision, incorporating the shorter term goals of the Bus System Improvement Plan, with the ideas contained in the MTA's 20 Year Long Range Transportation Plan.

DISCUSSION

There are four major elements in the Bus System Improvement Plan that will reconfigure and improve bus service:

- breaking the system into smaller pieces and establishing better lines of communication at the community level, replacing the "one size fits all" mindset.
- disaggregating service planning based, to a large degree, on the individual needs of the communities.
- restructuring of services, including the use of alternative service delivery options that would better match supply and demand.
- redistributing fiscal resources based on the new service configuration.

We believe this process provides the opportunity to not only improve mobility options, but also to reduce costs.

New Plans and Programs

However, in order to achieve these goals, several new projects and programs must be successful. The **Mobility Allowance** concept, which targets replacement of the least

effective fixed route operations, with more flexible, less costly alternatives must be implemented in a manner that reduces overall MTA costs. Plus, we must examine the potential of the upcoming **Smart Shuttle** demonstrations in the City of Los Angeles, which combine the goals of using a single vehicle for multiple service delivery options, with a more entrepreneurial organizational plan.

#### 20 Year Long Range Plan

Although these are optimistic plans for new programs, they are representative of the basic changes in the way we do business that we believe must occur, if we are to improve bus service. Many of these were developed as part of the MTA's Long Range Transportation Plan, which demonstrated the need to rethink public transit and related services in order to be effective in the changing environment during the next twenty years. For example, **higher capacity vehicles** were recommended for corridors with the greatest demand, with **vehicle speeds improved** through various transit priority and preference programs, such as signalization and channelization.

Also, buses were redeployed to provide **feeder service to the rail system** as it was expanded and there would be **minimization of service duplication** between bus operators, or rail and bus service was minimized. Establishing **countywide service standards** and reconsidering **MTA Operations' transit service policies** are other areas that will be considered.

There also appear to be a number of efficiencies that could be implemented with the development of **new fare media**, that would encourage multimodal trip making and could be used to identify individual subsidies and needs. Considering a **needs based program**, similar to other targeted subsidy programs, may also be effective.

MTA Operations has already implemented the **Regional General Manager program**, that increases accountability and responsibility at the regional level. At the same time, the **Regional Rebuild Facility** has begun major maintenance work on other operators vehicles. These are examples of additional improvements that can be accomplished by decentralizing some functions and centralizing others. We can more effectively **communicate with our riders** as well as improve **vehicle cleanliness, window replacement**, etc.

We must also develop a more thorough and inclusive **transit security plan**. We are not there yet, but there are opportunities in the work being done in conjunction with the Ad Hoc Board Committee to begin to assess those inclusive options.

The MTA also needs to continue to improve our ability to improve air quality by

reducing emissions through the use of **clean fuels**. We also need to maintain our leadership role in **clean fuels technology**.

### Conclusion

In order to improve bus service as a whole, we need to look at our bus system as a business would, that is, look at where our greatest needs are and allocate our resources to meet those needs. In addition, given limited resources, we need to continually do more with our existing resources.

Improving our bus system will also require better communication and coordination with **our transit riders**, and our **transportation delivery partners**, including: the **Municipal Operators**; the **local fixed route and paratransit operators**; the **TDM and rideshare professionals**; the wide network of **social service providers**; and the **private sector taxi, shuttle and transit operators**.

Transportation is an important part of all our lives, but to the transit dependent, public transportation is their only mobility option. We know we can do a better job of serving this important target group and we are confident that this plan helps accomplish this goal.

We will return to the Board in March, 1996, for approval of the Bus System Improvement Plan and updates on some of the individual projects.