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**TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**THROUGH: FRANKLIN E. WHITE**  
**FROM: LINDA BOHLINGER** *L.B.*  
**SUBJECT: STATUS OF MTA BICYCLE SERVICES AND FACILITIES**

**ISSUE**

This is an information item rather than an action request. It presents an overview of bicycle services and facilities that are directly operated by the MTA, as well as the reasons for MTA's commitment to bicycle programs.

**BACKGROUND**

Bicycle facilities are cost-effective transportation investments. Bicycles do not pollute, they contribute less to congestion than any other vehicular mode, they provide health benefits to the population, and the infrastructure that supports them is less costly to construct than comparable accommodations for larger vehicles.

The MTA is committed to investing in infrastructure and services that will support bicycle travel in Los Angeles. In the last five years it has developed a comprehensive program that integrates the bicycle into the MTA's transportation delivery system. Next year bicycles will be able to travel the entire Metro Rail network during off-peak hours, folding bikes will be allowed on all MTA services at all times, and high security bicycle parking facilities will be available throughout the Metro Rail system.

**Bike-on-Rail.** The MTA's Bike-on-Rail program was initiated January 1, 1991. Cyclists were only allowed to board evenings, weekends and holidays until it was determined that there were no operational problems associated with the program. Hours of accessibility were progressively extended. Today cyclists may board the Blue, Green and Red Lines anytime except 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., weekdays. Bicycle boarding hours may be extended after the opening of several more Red Line segments – after station crowding and train crowding are evaluated.

Bicyclists must obtain boarding permits. The purpose of this requirement is to insure that bicyclists receive instruction on where to place bicycles on board, how to bring bicycles into subway stations, and hours of permitted service. Almost 300 bike permits have been issued this year.

**Folding Bicycles.** Folding bicycles will soon be allowed on MTA buses and rail cars at all hours of operation. Staff has field-tested a variety of folding bicycles in crowded conditions and have found that, when carried on as covered packages (almost all folding bicycle manufacturers supply bike bags with their product), they present no more problems than allowable packages of similar dimensions.

Since some folding bikes can be very large, staff is working on specifications that would only allow models which will not inconvenience passengers. A model with folded dimensions as large as 13 inches by 27 inches by 34 inches has passed the field test and may be the basis of the MTA specification standard. This particular model unfolds to a full-sized bicycle. The folding bicycle policy will make the entire MTA system accessible to cyclists at all times.

**Bicycle Parking at Rail Stations.** The MTA will be providing bicycle parking spaces wherever Metro Rail goes. As the system grows so will the provision of bicycle parking. The parking will be available at street level, so that cyclists who are not MTA patrons will also be able to park their vehicles.

The parking program began on May 22, 1994, when 120 parking spaces were deployed at five stations on the Blue Line. (In 1995 four spaces were added at a sixth station.) Just before Thanksgiving, 44 spaces were deployed at three stations of the MOS-1 segment of the Red Line. Twelve more spaces will be deployed at a fourth station in mid-December. By January, 148 spaces will be deployed in 12 stations of the Green Line. At the same time 20 spaces will be available for MTA employee and public use at the Gateway Center. Spaces are also being incorporated into the designs of all MOS-2 and MOS-3 stations and selected Pasadena Blue Line stations. In just over 1½ years the MTA's public bicycle parking facilities will have grown from 0 to 348 spaces, making the MTA the third largest transit provider of bicycle parking in the United States.

Two types of bicycle parking are being provided: racks for the casual user and lockers for the commuter who wants a reserved space. High security racks are available on a first-come basis. These allow the cyclist to carry only a lock to secure his or her bicycle (in fact, using chains or cables are discouraged because they compromise the security mechanism). The locks are placed in a bolt-cutter proof cage or compartment. The rack on the Red Line is a new product that also contains a small storage compartment (for books, helmets, etc.) that can be secured with the same lock that secures the bicycle. Bicycle lockers are also be available for lease. The lease rates are \$25 for 3 months, \$45 for 6 and \$70 for a year. The rental fees for these spaces are low for reserved parking – at the annual rate the fee is \$5.83 a month or about 19¢ per day.

**Marketing.** By the end of 1995 the infrastructure of the bicycle program will largely be in place. All of the programs are currently administered through the Customer Relations department's *Cycle Express* program. By calling (213) 922-3777 a cyclist can lease a locker, obtain a bicycle boarding permit, or find out about folding bike specifications and where bicycle parking is available. The next step is to market the availability and benefits of the MTA Cycle Express program.

Standard marketing measures may need only slight modifications to be successful. Cycle Express was mentioned in a brochure about rail services that was widely distributed during the Green Line opening. It generated a large volume of inquiries about permits and rentals. As a result, the Marketing department is preparing a take-one brochure on MTA bicycle programs that will not only be placed in

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buses and customer service centers, but also will be sent to bicycle stores in corridors served by the Metro Rail system.

There will be special measures as well. One notable effort will be the promotion of MTA's bicycle-related personnel policies to other agencies. The MTA will be providing 20 bicycle parking spaces to employees and the public at its new headquarters building. After the move to the new building it will absorb part of the cost of locker rentals anywhere in the system for employees who commute by bicycle. The parking policy will be publicized to Employee Transportation Coordinators (ETCs) as a low cost employee benefit that will receive Air Quality (Regulation 15) credit. The policy will be publicized in monthly ETC network meetings, a feature article in Crossroads magazine, a presentation to the Association for Commuter Transportation, and through MTA Planning & Programming's Area Teams.

In 1997, after a year of operating parking facilities on all three rail lines, the locker fee structure may be reconsidered – depending upon cyclist demand. At full occupancy the fee structure would more than meet operating costs. Rather than increasing the fee more parking spaces would probably be provided. On the other hand, if occupancy is very low then staff would consider a reduction in the fee structure or temporary promotional fees in an effort to develop a locker clientele. The Washington Area Metropolitan Transit Agency has used the identical locker fee structure for 24 years and has obtained a 59% non-winter occupancy rate. Eliminating fees would not be considered because of other agency experiences. For example, lockers are free in San Diego. The agency in charge of the lockers (Caltrans District 11) reported that there are 3 year waiting lists for lockers at some rail stations, but inspections show an 11% occupancy rate – implying that a large number of people retain the spaces but rarely use them. Some form of regular payment, even if nominal, would eliminate this problem.

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