

Metro News **BULLETIN**

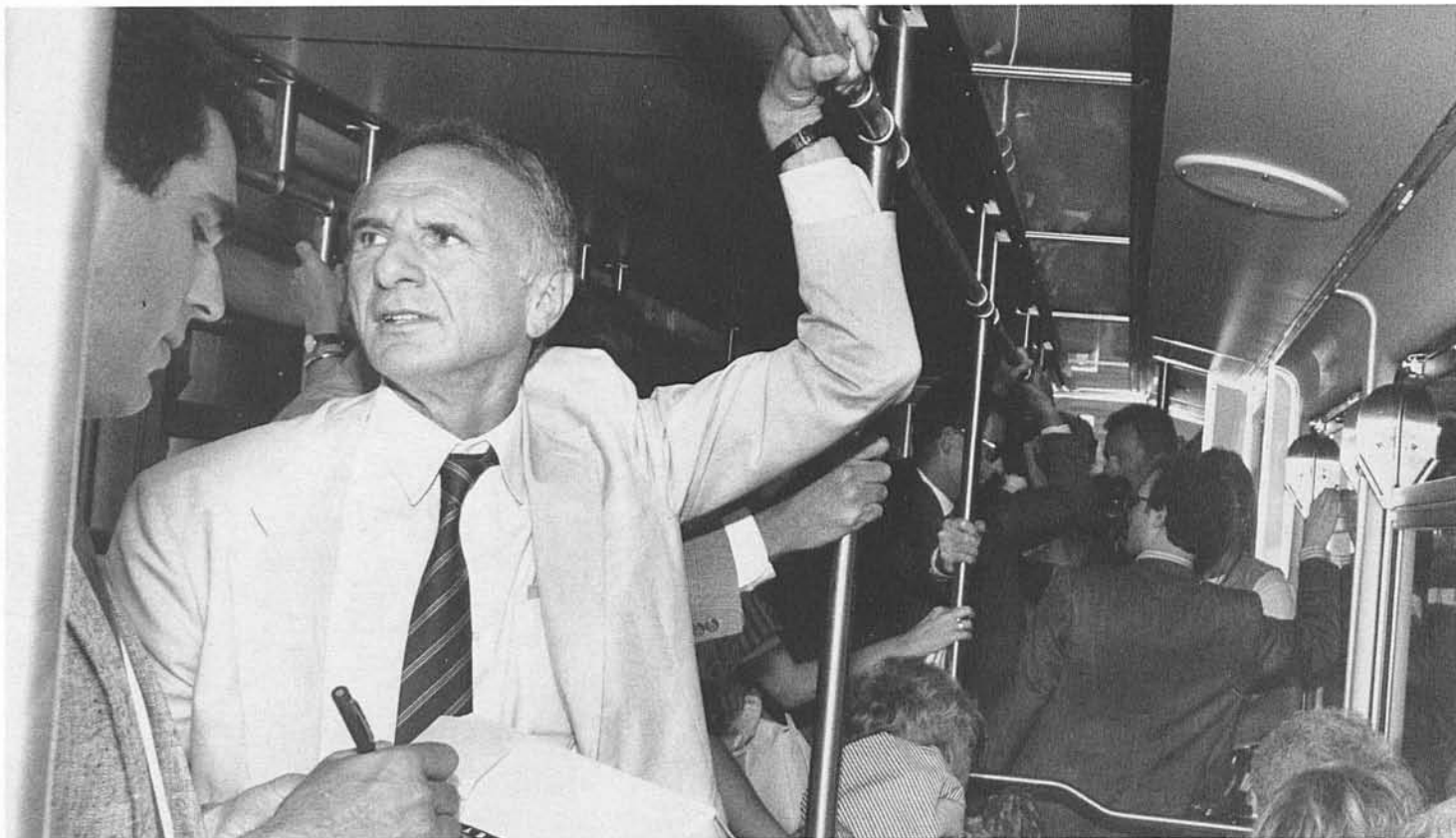
Metro Blue Line Opens **CELEBRATING L.A.'s RETURN TO RAIL**



TRANSPORTATION BREAKTHROUGH — The first train of the Metro Blue Line light rail system runs through a banner in downtown Los Angeles marking the opening of the line July 14. A series of celebrations and ceremonies followed the inaugural run of the Blue Line as it traveled along the 19-mile route from Los Angeles to Long Beach.

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THE FIRST STRAPHANGER — Supervisor Ed Edelman stands to talk to a reporter as the first train leaves Pico Station for its inaugural run. The term straphanger originated in New York, when those who rode the subway cars standing up held onto leather straps. Stainless steel grab bars and a smooth, almost motionless ride make standing while riding the Blue Line an easy task, as shown by the supervisor.

THOUSANDS RIDE BLUE LINE DURING FIRST TWO WEEKS

600,000 Take To The Rails For Free Test Ride

RTD officials were overwhelmed by the initial success of the Metro Blue Line as more than 600,000 persons took advantage of the District's free ride offer on the light rail during the first two weeks after the grand opening.

"Even with the free rides that were in effect through July 31, we did not expect ridership figures to approach the numbers we have seen in our first two weeks of operation," said RTD General Manager Alan F. Pegg.

Some 32,000 rode the Blue Line on the day of the July 14th opening, with nearly 70,000 boarding the trains the following day. Weekday averages held at 30,000 for the two weeks, rising to the 60,000-plus figure on the weekends.

Officials for both the RTD and Los Angeles County Transport-

ation Commission had predicted daily ridership during the initial stages of Blue Line operations at 5,000. However, when the decision was made to extend the offer of free rides on the line from the first two days to the first two weeks, ridership predictions were far outstripped.

"The overwhelming positive public response demonstrates to us that people in Long Beach, Los Angeles and cities along the 22-mile corridor are willing to leave their cars at home and ride these fast, smooth, air-conditioned trains," said RTD Board President Nick Patsouras.

"With security tight along the system, well-maintained stations and trains running on time, public transportation users are discovering an alternative to driving on clogged freeways," said Patsouras.



GREETING THE CROWD — Supervisor Kenneth Hahn, right, waves a greeting to the crowd during a stop-over for ceremonies during the first run of the Blue Line train. Joining Hahn at the ceremonies is Supervisor Deane Dana, left.



OPENING CEREMONIES — RTD Board of Directors President Nick Patsaouras, at podium, address the crowd gathered for the opening ceremonies at the Pico Station of the Metro Blue Line in downtown Los Angeles. Among the officials also attending the ceremonies are, from left, Los Angeles County supervisors Kenneth Hahn and Ed Edelman. In the foreground is a bell from the historic Red Car trolley which was rung to launch the first Blue Line train.

CEREMONIES, SPEECHES HIGHLIGHT OPENING OF METRO BLUE LINE

Inaugural Train Ride Features Three Stops For Celebrations

With a symbolic ringing of a historic Red Car trolley bell, Los Angeles returned to rail with the official opening ceremonies for the Metro Blue Line light rail system in downtown Los Angeles on Saturday, July 14.

At the sound of the bell, the first Blue Line car sped from the tunnel under Flower Street, burst through a banner and pulled into Pico Station to begin its inaugural run down the 22-mile line from Los Angeles to Long beach.

Among just a few of the many dignitaries attending the opening day ceremonies were Los Angeles County supervisors Ed Edelman and Kenneth Hahn; Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley; RTD Board President Nick Patsaouras; RTD General Manager Alan Pegg; Los Angeles County Transportation Commission members Christine Reed and Jacki Bacharach; and

Lieutenant Governor Leo McCarthy.

The first train of the new era of public transit for Los Angeles made three stops on its inaugural journey to Long Beach for a series of planned celebrations enroute.

Los Angeles Councilwoman Joan Milke Flores and Supervisor Hahn were the featured speakers as the train pulled into the 103rd Street Station in Watts, while mayors Walter Tucker of Compton, Robert Henning of Lynwood, and Thomas Jackson of Huntington Park boarded the train at Compton Station.

Mayor Vera DeWitt of Carson and other officials joined during a stop at the Del Amo Station, with Mayor Ernie Kell and Councilman Ray Grabinski of Long Beach greeting the train as it pulled into the Willow Station, its final destination of the planned opening celebration.

Following the ceremonies, thousands jammed the stations

along the route for the first of two weeks of free rides on the Blue Line offered by the RTD.

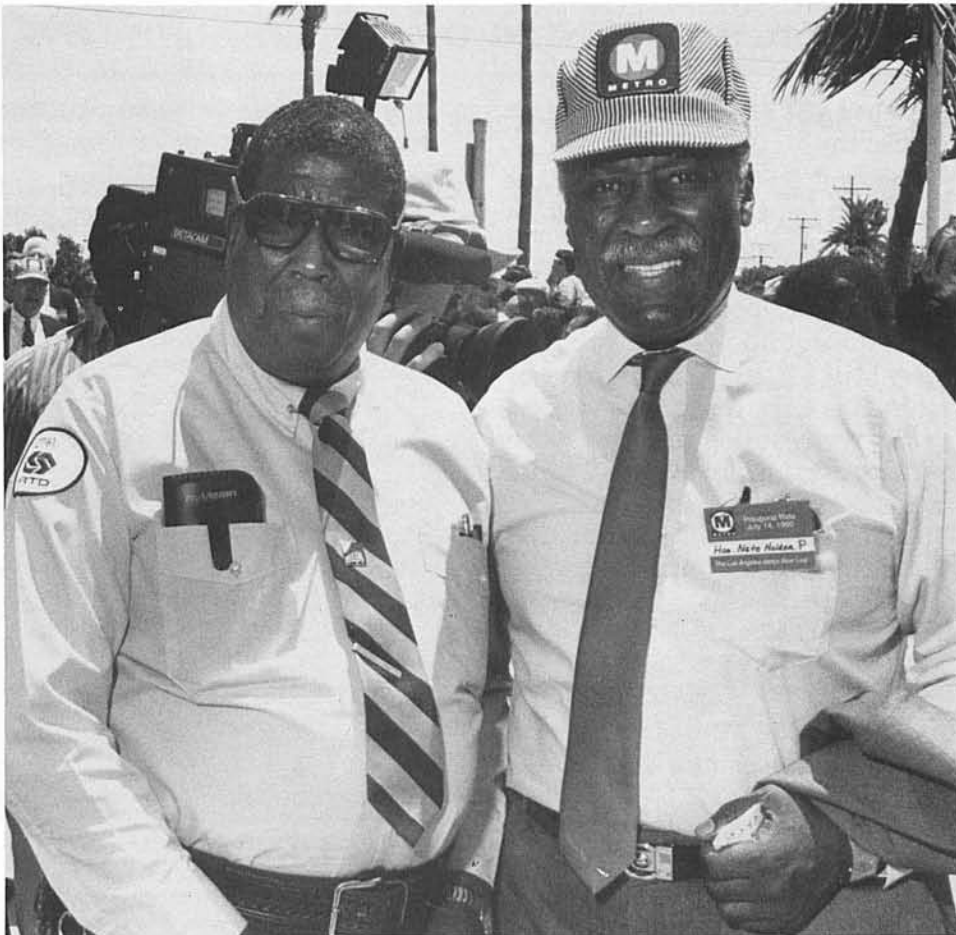


FANS OF RAIL — Los Angeles City Councilman John Ferraro, left, and RTD General Manager Alan Pegg prepare for the first ride on the Blue Line following the opening ceremonies. Pegg got into the spirit of the day by donning an official Metro Blue Line train cap.



PUTTING ON A SHOW — Members of the Carson Queenettes, a youth drill team from the City of Carson, provided some of the entertainment at ceremonies held opening day at the Del Amo Station.

ENJOYING THE ACTIVITIES — RTD Board Member Gordana Swanson and Los Angeles County Supervisor Kenneth Hahn greet each other during the opening Blue Line ceremonies.



MEETING ALONG THE LINE — RTD Bus Operator Billy Thomas, left, poses with Los Angeles City Councilman Nate Holden during ceremonies held along the Blue Line route.



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