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# Mayor Backs Plan To Extend Light Rail To Ontario Airport

## *Expansion Plan Needs Approval From MTA*

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### **LOS ANGELES --**

As part of a plan to reduce congestion at LAX while increasing regional air-traffic capacity, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa announced his support Tuesday for extending a proposed light rail line to city-operated Ontario International Airport.

Ontario Mayor Paul Leon and San Bernardino County Supervisor Gary Ovitt met with the mayor to discuss the possibility of extending the Metro Gold Line east to Ontario, even though the Metropolitan Transportation Authority has yet to approve any extension of the downtown-to-Pasadena line.

The MTA is considering a proposal to extend the light rail line 22.4 miles from Pasadena to Montclair. Last year, Ontario officials announced their support for making the Ontario airport the end of the line.

"Ontario must be a major point of entry into Southern California," Villaraigosa said at a City Hall news conference. "I think we're actually onto something here. Stopping in Montclair doesn't quite do it. Taking it to Ontario makes this something that we have to look at."

The mayor said he wants to increase the number of passengers at Ontario airport from 7.9 million a year to 30 million by 2025. The relationship between LAX and Ontario would be similar to that of O'Hare International Airport, a major international hub, and Chicago Midway International Airport, which serves mainly smaller, domestic flights, Villaraigosa said.

"I think we're going to have to continue to strategize, to figure out how to get air traffic to Ontario," Villaraigosa said.

Part of that strategy may include increasing maintenance and operation fees at LAX.

"There's no incentive to go to Ontario when it's cheaper to fly into LAX," the mayor said.

The MTA board, of which Villaraigosa is a member, will consider the Foothill Extension in the spring as part of its Long Range Transportation Plan. The MTA estimates the extension will cost \$1.772 billion in 2015 dollars, and could take at least a decade to design and construct.

The extension will compete for funding against plans to extend the Metro Orange Line busway, Metro Purple Line subway, the second phase of the Metro Expo Line, connecting the Metro Green Line to LAX, a transit line from Long Beach to Pasadena, and various highway projects.

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