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| **Thursday, September 17, 2009**  **20090917-1**  In this issue:   * **U.S. Senate Adopts FY 2010 Transportation Spending Bill** * **Metro Customer Satisfaction On-board Survey Results** |
| **U.S. Senate Adopts FY 2010 Transportation Spending Bill**  Today, the U.S. Senate adopted its FY 2010 transportation spending bill. The U.S. House of Representatives approved its version of the FY 2010 transportation spending bill on July 23, 2009 by a margin of 256 to 168. The Senate Committee on Appropriations approved its transportation spending bill on July 30, 2009 by a vote of 30 to 0. Like the House bill, the Senate measure includes the final appropriation ($9.5 million) of federal funds for the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension and also includes $13.5 million for the Wilshire Boulevard Bus Only Lane project, which is the second installment of federal funds for this Small Starts project. The Senate bill includes $50 million for Positive Train Control efforts nationwide. The Senate and House transportation spending bills will now be reconciled in conference, which is expected to occur promptly. I look forward to continuing to keep Board members informed as to the status of the FY 2010 federal transportation spending bill.  **Los Angeles Times Focusing on TAP Management Review**  The Los Angeles Times will run a weekend article about the KPMG management review of the Transit Access Pass (TAP) system. A reporter attended the Operations committee and heard the report and afterwards interviewed me. The reporter observed that the costs associated with TAP have increased substantially as new elements have been added such as new rail lines and turnstiles, and after a decade, TAP has not been fully implemented.  I noted TAP will offer great benefits to public transit users in Los Angeles County once it’s all in place. Besides the potential for enjoying seamless travel on different carriers, customers can add value to the cards via the Internet and avoid waiting in line to buy a pass. If patrons register cards, they can be reimbursed for the stored fare value if they lose their TAP cards, and we can collect better ridership data to tailor service to accommodate changing travel patterns, among many other benefits.  However, I acknowledged there are issues that must be fixed in order to capitalize on the TAP program. I plan to report back to the Board within six weeks with an action plan that will set a firm date for project implementation, cap costs and ensure there are the necessary internal controls in place to get the job done. I will advise the Board next week of some immediate steps. I said it is essential that Metro work one-on-one with the municipal bus operators to resolve their concerns, including fare reimbursement. (This week the TAP system was able to generate financial reports that would facilitate this process.) A broader integrated management team to oversee TAP implementation should include the municipal operators as well as Metro Operations, Customer Relations, Marketing and others. Metro operators need additional training, and we need fare inspection protocol on the rail lines, among other changes.  I also said I was encouraged that initial reports show revenue has increased at Metro Rail stations where turnstiles, an important element in the TAP program, have been installed. I have directed staff to track customer complaints about TAP and share this data with the Board.  I am grateful to the Mayor and the Board for ordering the TAP management review, noting it’s a tool I will use to accelerate implementation and manage TAP costs.  **Metro Customer Satisfaction On-board Survey Results**  This afternoon, Media Relations issued a news release noting that a recently conducted survey of more than 15,000 Metro riders shows that 85 percent of those polled indicated that they either agree or strongly agree that they are satisfied with Metro bus and rail service compared to 15 percent who disagree and 79 percent believed that the Metro bus/rail system is better today than a year ago. The survey was discussed by staff today at the Board’s Executive Management & Audit Committee meeting.  The release notes that the latest on-board survey, conducted in June 2009, clearly shows that customer satisfaction continues to be high among Metro riders, up from 83 percent of those polled in a survey conducted in the Spring of 2008. The on-board survey also shows that the perception of on-time performance of the system continues to climb with 76 percent agreeing that their bus/train is generally on time compared to 24 percent who disagreed.  Nearly 82 percent thought that the bus operator on their particular line was courteous, 72 percent believed the bus stops and train stations were clean, 77 percent thought the bus/train they were traveling in was generally clean and 84 percent say they normally have a seat, the highest level of satisfaction with having a seat, up from 81 percent when compared to last year’s survey.  The on-board survey was conducted system wide over a four week period by The Applied Management and Planning Group based in Los Angeles using a field crew of 20 surveyors that conducted the survey on-board buses and trains as patrons used the system. A total of 15,895 patrons responded to the survey. The survey covered all directly-operated Metro Bus lines and Metro Rail.  Link to News Release:   <http://www.metro.net/news_info/press/Metro_144.htm> |
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