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| **Thursday, September 13, 2012 120913-1**  **In this Issue:**  **Los Angeles Times Inquires About Take Back L.A. March This Afternoon** |
| **Los Angeles Times Inquires About Take Back L.A. March This Afternoon**  The Los Angeles Times plans on covering this afternoon’s protest march organized by the Bus Riders Union, the East L.A. Community Corporation and other social justice groups. Media Relations staff countered the major points the protestors are claiming and added some key points. First, Metro has had a major positive impact on affordable housing in Los Angeles County. Our development projects that have been built, are under construction, or will start construction within a year involve 1,222 affordable housing units, and many more are in the pipeline. Second, all the affordable units that were acquired for the canceled Red Line subway Eastside station and the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension were replaced. Third, all of our projects are transit oriented and green. Metro has not partnered with big box chain developers like Wal-Mart because those projects are not transit oriented. People who shop there likely will drive because they will be transporting heavy packages, which would be difficult to carry on buses or trains. Fourth, Metro staff has held many discussions with community members in Boyle Heights, and two key elected officials who represent the community serve on the Metro Board of Directors so residents have plenty of opportunity for input, and they can address the full Board of Directors.  Moreover, staff noted that critics of a drug store development in Boyle Heights should be aware that the developer’s plans fell through. In October, staff will seek approval from the Board to solicit development proposals for several mixed use projects in Boyle Heights that could include new affordable housing. There is a housing development at First and Lorena with up to 52 affordable housing units and 10,000 square feet of community retail space that should start construction within a year. Staff also talked about the positive economic impact of the development projects and jobs that benefit the entire region. Staff also addressed the bus versus rail debate. The march will start at 3:30 p.m. around Olvera Street and will end at Mariachi Plaza in Boyle Heights approximately two or three hours later. Online posts and possibly a print story are expected in the Los Angeles Times. | |
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