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Metro Secures \$315 Million In State Funding for Exposition Line

By RICK JAGER

(April 27, 2006) The California Transportation Commission (CTC) approved the allotment of \$315 million, Thursday, for the Exposition Light Rail Transit Project.

The funds are LA County's share of the 2006 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) , a major source of funding for the project.

"With this funding, we are one step closer to breaking ground on the Expo Line," said Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. "The CTC's support is vital to our efforts to reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, and expand our public transportation system."

Construction of the 8.5-mile line is expected to start this summer. The line, which will run along a Metro-owned right-of-way along Exposition Boulevard, will connect downtown LA and Culver City

Last month, Metro officials asked the CTC during their STIP public hearing to fund the 8.5-mile Exposition Light Rail Project, indicating it was critical that investment of state monies be allocated to the project.

'A win-win situation'

"The Exposition Light Rail Project has the potential to relieve some of the heavy traffic on the Santa Monica Freeway, which makes the CTC's allocation of these state dollars a win-win situation for all Westside commuters," said Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky. "This is great news for the region."

Metro requested a total of \$523 million from the CTC. This includes \$315 million from the 2006 STIP and \$208 million in Traffic Congestion Relief Program (TCRP) funding which was approved last month.

The recent allocation of the \$208 million was committed by the state legislature and governor in June 2000, but the CTC has been unable to meet that commitment until now, due to the state's General Fund deficits.

The allotment of these state dollars will free up transportation funds from the previously established Exposition Line budget.

The money can be used to fund numerous carpool lane segments such as those nearing construction on State Route 60 in the San Gabriel Valley and the Golden State and Santa Ana segments of Interstate 5 in the San Fernando Valley and Gateway Cities areas.

The freed-up monies could also possibly partially fund future planned

projects such as transit projects and/or carpool lanes on the I-5 Freeway from Route 170 to the 134 Freeway, the northbound I-405 Freeway over the Sepulveda Pass, and the I-10 Freeway from Puente to Citrus or other transportation improvements.

Metro officials expressed appreciation to Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and the Los Angeles legislative delegation for their continued support for transportation improvements throughout the region.

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