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| **Wednesday, September 12, 2012 120912-1**  **In this Issue:**  **Metro ExpressLanes Reaches Significant Milestone**  **Measure J**  **KPCC Radio Reporter Interviews Metro Staff in Advance of Thursday Protest March**  **Los Angeles Times Architecture Critic Inquires About Crenshaw Project**  **West County Connectors Freeway Interchange Closures**  **I-405 Sepulveda Pass Improvements Project Construction Notices**  **Expo Line Construction Notice** |
| **Metro ExpressLanes Reaches Significant Milestone**  This morning, Media Relations issued a news release noting that our agency reached a significant milestone in an innovative project to ease traffic congestion on two of Los Angeles County’s busiest freeways. Metro celebrated the opening of the 5,000th FasTrak® account for traveling on the Metro ExpressLanes when they open on the I-110 Harbor Freeway in the fall and on the I-10 San Bernardino Freeway in early 2013. The news release notes that t**he project** began offering the transponders to the general public on July 25, 2012. Since then, more than 5,000 FasTrak® accounts have been opened and FasTrak® transponders sent to the account holders so they can take advantage of the Metro ExpressLanes. I noted that reaching this milestone so quickly demonstrates the strong public interest in Metro ExpressLanes and the traffic congestion relief it promises to those who travel on two of our county’s busiest freeways and urge everyone to beat the rush and apply now for a FasTrak® account so they’ll be ready to take advantage of the Metro ExpressLanes when they open this fall on the Harbor Freeway and early next year on the San Bernardino Freeway. The release also noted that there are several options for opening a Metro ExpressLanes FasTrak® account and obtaining a transponder, including: Visiting [www.metroexpresslanes.net](http://www.metroexpresslanes.net), calling 511 and saying “ExpressLanes”, visiting walk-in centers at 500 W. 190th Street in Gardena or at El Monte Station, 3501 Santa Anita Avenue, El Monte or mailing an application, which is available online, to Metro ExpressLanes, PO Box 3878, Gardena, CA 90247. To view the press release, please click [here](http://www.metro.net/news/simple_pr/0pening-5000th-FasTrak-Account-Congestion-reductio/).  <http://www.metro.net/news/simple_pr/0pening-5000th-FasTrak-Account-Congestion-reductio/>  **Measure J**  This past June, our Board of Directors authorized placing Measure J on the November ballot. There is now a Measure J web page available, [metro.net/measurej](http://www.metro.net/projects/measurej/), which provides information such as the expenditure plan, the full text, ballot language and a map of the transit and highway projects to be accelerated. Measure J will extend for 30 additional years the existing one-half cent sales tax that was approved in 2008 and is currently set to expire in 2039 (Measure R). The additional funds will be used to secure bonds, which will allow Metro to accelerate construction of transportation improvements.  **KPCC Radio Reporter Interviews Metro Staff in Advance of Thursday Protest March**  A radio reporter from KPCC radio interviewed Metro Media Relations staff today for an advance story about a protest march planned for tomorrow, Thursday, September 13, 2012 that will target Metro on a variety of fronts. The Bus Riders Union (BRU) and various social justice groups want community control of Metro land-use decisions. They claim Metro displaced 250 families in Boyle Heights, it’s the stooge of Wal-Mart and other major chain stores, and they continue to oppose any new rail construction. Metro staff countered that these arguments are baseless. First, Metro is a major player when it comes to affordable housing. Our development projects, including those under construction, include 1,222 affordable housing units. Last spring the MacArthur Park project by the Red Line opened with 172 affordable units and the residents get transit passes, too. Staff noted within a year construction of the First & Lorena project in Boyle Heights should be underway and that it will include up to 52 affordable housing units. Yes, low-income residents were displaced in the Eastside for the Gold Line extension and for an Eastside Red Line station that was never built, however, all those housing units were replaced. KPCC was told that Metro projects are transit-oriented, they get people out of their cars, they’re green, and they have created thousands of jobs, and we had significant community input. Moreover, we work closely with local elected officials and the public has the opportunity for addressing the Metro Board of Directors before development projects go forward. In addition, last we checked, Metro has not partnered with Wal-Mart to build a super store anywhere. As for the BRU call to kill the rail program, staff noted that 2 million people of all income levels and ethnicities approved Measure R in the middle of the Great Recession. They want the new rail lines as well as solid bus service, and the operating subsidies have kept fares low for our riders. A KPCC radio story could air later today. We expect additional media coverage tomorrow for the protest march that will begin at 3:00 p.m. in Father Serra Park near Placita Olvera in downtown Los Angeles and conclude at Mariachi Plaza in Boyle Heights about 6:00 p.m. About 400 marchers are expected, according to organizers.    **Los Angeles Times Architecture Critic Inquires About Crenshaw Project**    Today, Los Angeles Times architecture critic Christopher Hawthorne, working on a series about Los Angeles boulevards, briefly interviewed Crenshaw Project Director Rob Ball about the possible construction of an underground station at Leimert Park as part of the Crenshaw/LAX Transit Corridor Project. Staff explained it depends if the proposals include the construction of a Leimert Park station within the $1.749 billion Board approved budget. The final decision will be made by the Metro Board when it approves a design-build contract in 2013. Metro staff also noted it is trying everything possible to find other funding sources to build the underground station. A story may run Sunday.  **West County Connectors Freeway Interchange Closures**  Two freeway interchanges will be closed this coming weekend as part of Orange County Transportation Authority's (OCTA) West County Connectors (WCC) project. When completed, the WCC project will result in a seamless High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) connector lane between the I-605, I-405 and SR-22 freeways. The project is scheduled to be completed in 2014. Beginning this Friday evening, September 14, 2012 the northbound (NB) connector of the I-405 freeway to the NB I-605 will be closed for approximately 55 hours, through early Monday morning, September 17, 2012. That freeway interchange will also be closed for the same 55 hour period the following weekend, from Friday evening September 21, 2012 through early Monday morning September 24, 2012. If you will be traveling in that area, there are two detours advised for the NB I-405/NB I-605 closure: (1) take Seal Beach Boulevard. Exit and turn right, proceed north on Seal Beach Boulevard/Los Alamitos Boulevard and turn left on Katella Avenue to access the northbound I-605 freeway; or (2) take Palo Verde Avenue exit and turn right, proceed north on Palo Verde Avenue, then turn right on Spring Street to access the northbound I-605 freeway on-ramp.  The other interchange closure associated with the WCC project is the the eastbound (EB) SR-22 connector to the NB I-405. This interchange will be closed for approximately 12 months, beginning this Sunday, September 16, 2012 at approximately 11:00 a.m. The recommended detour for that closure, from the EB SR-22, is to take the Studebaker Road exit, and turn right on Studebaker Road to access the NB I-405 on-ramp. If you would like to check on upcoming closures associated with that project you can visit their website [www.octa.net/westcounty](http://www.octa.net/westcounty). You can also sign up for to receive closure alert e-mails for the project on the bottom of that webpage, or e-mail [wccproject@octa.net](mailto:wccproject@octa.net).  **I-405 Sepulveda Pass Improvements Project** **Construction Notices**  Freeway Soundwall Removal The remaining portion of the freeway soundwall on the west side of Sepulveda Boulevard between Homedale Street and Bronwood Avenue has been scheduled for removal. Work is anticipated to start on Monday, September 17, 2012 through Monday, October 1, 2012. Work hours are scheduled from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and from 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. This construction work will affect the northbound I-405, west side of Sepulveda Boulevard between Montana Avenue and the Sunset Boulevard Bridge. To view the complete construction notice, please click [here](http://www.metro.net/projects_studies/I405/images/notice_2012_0917a.pdf). For the latest road closure information, please visit [metro.net/405](http://www.metro.net/projects/i-405/).  <http://www.metro.net/projects_studies/I405/images/notice_2012_0917a.pdf>  <http://www.metro.net/projects/i-405/>  Temporary Construction Beam Removal and Backfill  Removal of the temporary construction support beams to build the retaining wall along Sepulveda Boulevard between Sepulveda Way and Church Lane/Ovada Place will resume on Monday, September 17, 2012 and continue through Friday, September 21, 2012. Backfill operations are anticipated to continue through Friday, October 5, 2012. Work hours are scheduled from 8:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. . To view the complete construction notice, please click [here](http://www.metro.net/projects_studies/I405/images/notice_2012_0917.pdf). For the latest road closure information, please visit [metro.net/405](http://www.metro.net/projects/i-405/).  <http://www.metro.net/projects_studies/I405/images/notice_2012_0917.pdf>  <http://www.metro.net/projects/i-405/>  **Expo Line Construction Notice**  Potholing to Identify Existing Underground Utilities  As part of the construction of the Expo Line project, work crews will be potholing in order to identify existing underground utilities on Venice Boulevard in the City of Los Angeles. The work is being managed and performed by the general contractor Balfour Beatty Infrastructure Inc. (BBI), and its subcontractors. Work is scheduled to begin on Thursday, September 20, 2012 through Friday, September 28, 2012 during the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. No work is scheduled to take place on weekends. To view the complete construction notice, please click [here](http://www.buildexpo.org/pdf_uploads/cons_obbbcou15o.pdf).  <http://www.buildexpo.org/pdf_uploads/cons_obbbcou15o.pdf> | |
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