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LA City Council Transportation Committee Approves Hail-A-Taxi Pilot Program

Last week, the Los Angeles City Council Transportation Committee approved a six-month Hail-A-Taxi Pilot Program, which would allow taxi drivers to load and unload passengers in some otherwise restricted zones in both downtown Los Angeles and Hollywood. The committee directed that the item not be sent to the full Council at this time to give the LA Department of Transportation (LADOT) an opportunity to meet with us to resolve our concerns with the project.

Chief Operations Officer, Carolyn Flowers addressed the committee stating that while we support the concept of hail-a-taxi, we do not support the provision allowing taxis to load and unload passengers in bus zones. This provision would impact the on-time performance of our buses with increased congestion and risk of accidents in bus zones and traffic lanes where taxis have stopped. I have written a letter to the Transportation Committee Chair, Wendy Greuel, further stating our position. We are scheduled to meet with LADOT staff next week to discuss these issues.

Media Inquiry into 2008 APTA Report on Increase in First Quarter Ridership

Earlier today, Media Relations staff received calls from Fox News and the Los Angeles Times about local transit ridership growth after APTA issued a press release saying public transit ridership in the nation rose 3.3 percent in the January through March quarter of 2008 compared to a year earlier. The report noted that our subway ridership rose 5.4 percent, light rail ridership was up 1.77 percent, but bus ridership declined 6.23 percent. Staff noted that our latest ridership report is for April and that showed systemwide bus ridership had bounced back. It was about the same as April 2007, while Metro Rail ridership year over year rose 4.48 percent.

Bus ridership had lagged for months following the fare increase last summer, but the report in April was positive, and Metro Orange Line ridership showed year over year gains. Staff noted that a Metro Day Pass is a little more than the cost of a gallon of gas. With consumers squeezed at the pump, at the grocery store and elsewhere, we are a bargain. Staff also told reporters that the Metro Vanpool program is the fastest growing in the country, and calls about carpooling are way up.

APTA Rail Conference in San Francisco

Earlier today, I joined Chair O'Connor on the "Role of Passenger Rail in Sustainable Development" panel during one of the technical sessions at the APTA Rail Conference in San Francisco. I spoke about the various combinations of sustainable tools and projects that we employ to promote sustainability while improving overall mobility in Los Angeles County such as our growing fleet of CNG buses, Leed Silver rating on all new projects and transit oriented development projects, solar panels at our bus facilities and the use of power-saving motor controllers in our escalators.

At the "Transit Vision 2050 Session" panel, I joined Stephen Schlickman, Executive Director of Regional Transportation Authority in Chicago and Linda Bohlinger, Vice President and Director of National Management Consulting with HNTB Corporation. I spoke about how we have used the visioning process in engaging the public to get more involved in our Long Range Transportation Plan, and in finding innovative ways to manage traffic such as congestion pricing, by using aggressive and creative marketing in the form of our Imagine Campaign. The panel was moderated by Cal Marsela, General Manager of the Regional Transportation District in Denver.

Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority Board Meeting

On Thursday, June 5, 2008, the Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority (Expo) Board is scheduled to meet at 10:00 a.m. in the Board of Supervisors' Hearing Room (381B) in the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration.

During the meeting, the Expo Board will consider the following:

- Receive and File a monthly report on contracts approved for May 2008 by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or under his delegated authority;
 - Authorize the CEO to execute the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) FY09 Annual Work Plan (AWP) in an amount not-to-exceed \$650,000;
 - Authorize the CEO to issue a Notice-to-Proceed for Contract Package D4, Overhead Contact System (OCS) and Traction Power Installation, to FCI/Fluor/Parsons (FFP), a joint venture, in an amount not-to-exceed \$15,219,827,
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including bond and subcontractor support from FFP; and

- Authorize the CEO to issue a Limited Notice-to-Proceed (LNTP) for Contract Package C2, La Brea Boulevard Structure, to FCI/Fluor/ Parsons (FFP), a joint venture, in an amount not-to-exceed \$7,728,884.

In addition, the Board will Receive and File the Monthly Phase I and Phase II Project Status Update for the Exposition Light Rail Transit Project.

Parking Forum Set for June 26, 2008

On Thursday, June 26, 2008, we will be holding our annual Parking Forum. The purpose of the forum is to convene representatives from cities in Los Angeles County, parking industry professionals, along with other stakeholders to discuss parking innovations, management, planning and parking issues in the region. The forum will include discussions on parking challenges, innovative policies that have been implemented in various jurisdictions, new parking technologies and potential solutions. The event will take place at our Headquarters from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the Gateway Plaza Room on the 3rd floor.

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