

<b>Board Committees Can Put ‘Pedal to the Metal’ on Transit Plans</b>  (Feb. 15, 2002) MTA Board committees can put the pedal to the metal on Los Angeles transit, next week, as they consider five separate motions that would advance the Eastside Light-Rail Line, the San Fernando Valley East-West Busway and the expansion of the Metro Rapid bus program.  In addition, the Operations Committee may vote to award an \$84 million contract for the implementation of a Universal Fare System.  The action begins on Wednesday when the Construction Committee will consider a motion authorizing the CEO to solicit a design-build contract for the aboveground portion of the Metro Gold Line through East LA. The six-mile rail line will have eight stations and will serve one of the city’s most heavily populated communities.  The motion also includes a provision for a more traditional design-bid-build contract for a 1.7-mile tunnel that will begin near the 101 Freeway and surface just west of 1st and Lorena. Tunnel construction is planned for mid-2003, with the start of rail line operations planned in mid-2008.  Then, on Thursday, the Planning and Programming Committee will be asked to certify the final environmental report for the Eastside Corridor – a necessary step in the process of approvals before construction of the light-rail line can begin.  <b>Bus Rapid Transit contract</b>  Also at its Wednesday meeting, the Construction Committee will consider a motion authorizing the CEO to solicit a design-build contract for a \$329.5 million Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project along the Burbank/Chandler corridor. The 14-mile cross-valley busway would link the North Hollywood Metro Rail station with a planned transit hub at Warner Center.  That action is linked to a motion that comes before Planning and Programming, Thursday, to certify the final environmental impact report for the BRT project. The report details an extensive mitigation plan that addresses community concerns about construction and operation of the busway.  Construction of the busway could begin in spring 2003, with operations beginning in spring 2005.	<b>FEBRUARY AGENDA</b>
	<b>Operations Committee</b> 1 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 20
	<b>Item 41</b> Universal Fare System
	<b>Construction Committee</b> 2 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 20
	<b>Item 13</b> Eastside Light-Rail Transit Project
	<b>Item 14</b> San Fernando Valley Bus Rapid Transit Project
	<b>Finance and Budget Committee</b> 9:30 a.m., Thursday, Feb. 21
	<b>Executive Management Committee</b> 11 a.m., Thursday, Feb. 21
	<b>Planning and Programming Committee</b> 1 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 21
	<b>Item 31</b> Metro Rapid Expansion Program
	<b>Item 32</b> Eastside Corridor Final Environmental Impact Report
	<b>Item 33</b> San Fernando Valley East-West Final Environmental Report
	<b>Item 34</b> San Fernando Valley North-South Transit Corridor Study

Coincidentally with the busway plan, Planning and Programming will consider awarding a nine-month, \$977,299 contract to a Los Angeles firm to study the feasibility of building a north-south bus transit project that would interface with both the Burbank/Chandler busway and with Metro Rapid buses on Ventura Boulevard.

The committee also is expected to boost the already successful Metro Rapid bus program by voting to direct the staff to develop a five-year expansion plan.

### **Three corridors budgeted**

Twenty-three Metro Rapid corridors – located throughout the metropolitan area – are under consideration and three already are budgeted for construction. The South Broadway, Vermont and Van Nuys corridors are expected to be in operation within 12 to 18 months.

The three other Metro Rapid corridors in the proposed first phase of the expansion plan are Pico-Pico-Venice, Florence and Soto. The estimated total cost of implementing all six first-phase corridors is \$24.6 million. Metro Rapid buses on the current Whittier/Wilshire and Ventura Boulevard lines have reduced travel times by about 25 percent and increased ridership almost 35 percent.

All measures considered by the committees must have approval of the full Board. The Board's next meeting is scheduled at 9:30 a.m., Feb. 28.

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