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Committee to Consider Borrowing \$1.14 Billion for Regional Projects

- Development planned at Metro Rail Division 20
- Plan to extend Wilshire bus-only lanes also on agendas

(Sept. 14, 2004) A motion to borrow \$1.14 billion for regional transportation projects, build student housing and a parking lot at Metro Rail Division 20 and sell a parcel near the North Hollywood subway station are on Board committee agendas in September.

Committees also will hear reports on a strategy to extend the Wilshire buses-only lanes and on a change in Metro's policy on employee domestic partnerships.

Meetings for September:

- Executive Management and Audit, 11:30 a.m.,
Wednesday, Sept. 15
- Planning and Programming, 1 p.m.,
Wednesday, Sept. 15
- Finance and Budget, 10:30 a.m.,
Thursday, Sept. 16
- Construction, 11:30 a.m.,
Thursday, Sept. 16
- Operations, 1 p.m.,
Thursday, Sept. 16
- Board of Directors Meeting,
Thursday, Sept. 23

Item 12, Additional Funding for Transportation Projects: The Planning and Programming Committee will consider a motion to borrow \$1.14 billion against Proposition C sales tax revenues to fund the Exposition Light Rail Project and other transportation projects currently on hold.

The proposed action would help Southern California meet air quality requirements in the Federal Clean Air Act. Unless the region acts promptly on the projects, the Federal Highway Administration could delay or deny funding, permits or environmental clearances for local projects.

Combined with \$171.1 million in Proposition C cash, the total \$1.314.2 billion would provide \$240.9 million for the Expo Line; \$254.2 million for an I-5 carpool lane between Route 134 and Route 170; \$541.4 million for an I-5 carpool lane between Route 91 and Route 605; \$85 million for Alameda Corridor East improvements; and \$192.7 million for a connector between the I-5 and Route 14, and other projects in the deferred Call for Projects.

Item 15, Development at Metro Rail Yard: The Planning and Programming Committee will consider a motion authorizing the CEO to negotiate with a firm that wants to build 270 student housing units and a parking lot for 440 vehicles on about four acres of the 50-acre Metro Red Line Division 20.

The housing development would serve students at the Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arch), just across Santa Fe

Avenue from the rail yard. Both students and Metro employees would be permitted to use the parking lot.

According to a staff report, there is a need for additional parking for Metro employees at Division 20 as a result of the consolidation of some rail operations activities.

Item 11, Wilshire Buses-Only Lanes: The Planning and Programming Committee will hear a report on a strategy to extend the buses-only lanes on Wilshire Boulevard.

Last March, Metro opened the peak-period buses-only lanes in both directions on Wilshire between Federal and Centinela Avenues. The City Council's transportation committee voted last week in favor of making the lanes permanent.

A Metro staff analysis indicates that the lane could be extended east to the San Diego Freeway to ease eastbound afternoon peak-period traffic. Extending the buses-only lane west of Centinela Avenue into Santa Monica would be "a logical next step," the staff report says, to achieve a continuous lane.

Item 8, Domestic Partnerships Policy: The Executive Management and Audit Committee will hear a report on Metro's intention to adopt the state's legal definition of domestic partnership.

Effective Jan. 1, 2005, the California Domestic Partner Rights and Responsibilities Act will give state-registered domestic partners nearly all the legal rights, benefits, responsibilities, duties and obligations currently available only to married couples.

The state law will limit partnerships to opposite sex partners over age 62 and to same sex adult partners. Metro's current policy extends benefits to same sex or opposite sex domestic partners over age 18 who have signed an "Affidavit of Domestic Partnership."

In order to minimize the impact of the change, the report says employees currently registered as domestic partners will be allowed to retain their status as long as they are employed by Metro or until their domestic partnership is dissolved.

Adopting the state's domestic partner definition, the report says, will bring Metro into compliance with state law and will make these policies easier to administer. It also will give the agency tighter control over its benefits program for domestic partners.

Item 19, Sale of North Hollywood Property: The Finance and Budget Committee will consider a motion to sell a 7,631-square foot parcel at the intersection of Lankershim Boulevard and Weddington Street in North Hollywood to the LA Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA).

The property would be used by CRA to complete an approximately six-acre site extending from Weddington to Chandler that will be used for a development that will include 180 residential units.

Metro purchased the property from CRA in 1997 for \$154,089 as the site of a blast release shaft for the Metro Red Line. The agency proposes to sell it back to CRA for \$298,000.

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