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Division 10 Expansion Plans Halted as Property Values Skyrocket

- Final EIR for new Division 6 headed for Board in spring
- Expansion at Division 1, Division 4 continues

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Jan. 4, 2005) Plans to expand Gateway Division 10 by 8.5 acres to provide for parking and operation of some 100 Metro Liner articulated buses have been placed on indefinite hold.

A stop-work order was issued, effective Dec. 27, when the property owner rejected Metro's final purchase offer. Negotiations were halted and project termination and closeout has begun.

The property owner demanded approximately 400 percent more than the initial appraised value of the property, putting it out of Metro's financial reach, according to Denise Longley, deputy executive officer of Facilities-Operations.

The 21 parcels considered for the division expansion are located on Mission Road and Gallardo Street, stretching from the south border of the division to Cesar Chavez Avenue. Action begun earlier to acquire the property through eminent domain procedures is expected to be rescinded at the January Board meeting.

Building up, not out

Metro now will look at less costly and more fiscally responsible alternatives to operate the 100 incoming articulated buses, says Longley.

"In the future, we will look at using our existing real estate to its fullest potential," she says. "We'll become more 'urbanized' by building up, instead of out."

She noted that transit properties in New York City and Chicago, where land also is limited and highly valued, have built multi-level transportation and maintenance facilities.

"We may follow their lead, as real estate becomes more expensive in the central core of Los Angeles," Longley says.

Division 6 plans continue

Meanwhile, plans to build a new division in West Los Angeles to replace Venice Division 6, as well as plans to expand Central City Division 1 and Non-Revenue Division 4 are continuing.

The public comment period on plans for the new Division 6 ended Dec. 21 and the developer's environmental consultants are working with Metro to consolidate the comments into the Final Environmental

Impact Report. Longley expects to present the Final EIR to the Board this spring.

Division 1 expansion

Metro has begun the first phase of construction – grading, paving, fencing and lighting – to expand Division 1 onto recently acquired property just to the south of the division, which is located at 6th and Central.

By March, Longley expects the new site will be paved and fenced and ready for use as an expanded bus-operating yard. When Industrial Street, which runs between Division 1 and the new site, is closed and improved, the addition will total approximately four acres.

A temporary auxiliary bus yard was opened in mid-December at Terminal 31 near the Regional Rebuild Center to operate additional consent decree Division 1 buses until the expansion is completed.

Division 4 expansion

A contract is expected to be awarded in January to clear and pave four acres adjacent to Division 4.

That project, due for completion in June 2005, will expand non-revenue vehicle parking from 258 to 500 spaces. The extra parking will permit the consolidation of non-revenue maintenance facilities.

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