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## Board Adopts Metro's \$2.86 Billion Budget for FY 2006

- Includes elimination of 133 full-time positions; \$1 billion for buses; \$613 million for rail; \$519 million for streets and highways

By MARC LITTMAN

(May 26, 2005) The Board of Directors adopted a \$2.86 billion budget, Thursday, for FY 2006.

The spending plan is \$153 million less than the FY 2005 amended budget, despite rising fuel, insurance, security, Worker's Compensation and other costs. General and administrative spending has been reduced to absorb these increases, including the elimination of 133 related full-time positions.

This is offset, in part, by the need to hire 98 union employees next year, mostly operators and mechanics, as Metro begins operating the Metro Orange Line and also complies with federal Consent Decree orders to continue adding more service on Metro Bus lines.

"In the year ahead, Metro again will be straitjacketed by financial constraints on many fronts and, yet, we will still push forward on major transit projects that will offer commuters and others new ways to beat traffic and the high price of gas," CEO Roger Snoble said.

Metro fares will remain the same. To help balance the operating budget, Metro will use \$77 million in "one-time" revenues such as sale/lease-back revenues and railroad right-of-way lease revenues from property owned by Metro.

Projects funded in the FY 2006 budget include:

- The 14-mile Metro Orange Line, which will open this fall.
- Three new Metro Rapid lines, which will debut in late June to serve Fairfax Avenue and Beverly and Lincoln Boulevards.
- Four Metro Rapid lines, which will begin service on Western Avenue, Santa Monica Boulevard, Long Beach Boulevard/Santa Fe Avenue and Reseda Boulevard.
- The Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension project, where twin boring machines will be lowered into the ground to begin tunneling in Boyle Heights.

It is also possible in FY 2006 that Metro could break ground on the Exposition light rail line first phase to Culver City.

## More than \$1 billion for buses

Nearly half the budget -- \$1.295 billion or 45.3 percent -- is earmarked for Metro Bus operating and capital expenses and support for municipal bus operators and paratransit programs countywide.

Metro will take delivery of 176 new buses in the next fiscal year including 170 new 60-foot buses. Additional buses may be ordered in FY 2006 but delivery probably will not take place until FY 2007.

### **Metro Rail funding**

The second biggest slice of the budget pie -- \$613 million or 21.4 percent -- will go for Metro Rail operating, construction and capital costs. This includes major construction of the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension.

Another \$57.9 million -- 2 percent -- is LA County's subsidy for the Metrolink commuter rail network that serves LA and four outlying counties.

### **Funding for streets and highway**

The next biggest portion of the budget -- \$519 million or 18.1 percent -- is for highway and other regional transportation programs, such as construction of freeway carpool lanes, freeway sound walls, street widening, better traffic signal coordination, grade separations at railroad crossings, bikeways, ride-sharing incentives, shuttles, and other local transportation programs.

Major projects under construction in FY 2006 will be:

- Interstate 5 carpool lanes in both directions from Route 14 to Route 118.
- Route 14 carpool lanes in both directions from Pearblossom to Avenue P-8.
- Interstate 405/US 101 interchange connector gap closure (Northbound 405 to Eastbound 101)
- Interstate 405 southbound auxiliary and carpool lanes from Waterford to Interstate 10 in West Los Angeles

The budget also includes funding for the Metro Freeway Service Patrol.

### **Debt service up slightly**

Metro's debt service next year will be \$309.7 million -- 10.8 percent of the budget. That's up \$4.1 million from this year for planned debt issuance primarily to support the Metro Eastside Extension and the Metro Orange Line.

Rounding out the FY 2006 Metro budget are expenditures for other governmental programs such as transportation planning, capital projects, legal and other expenses. These expenditures total \$64.7 million or 2.4 percent of the budget.