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Board Authorizes Purchase of 200 New Buses

- Buy includes 60-foot articulateds, 45-footers and hybrids
- Bus buy will exceed Consent Decree orders

By MARC LITTMAN

(Sept. 23, 2005) The Board of Directors authorized the purchase of 200 new buses, Thursday, all but six of them high-capacity CNG vehicles that will be assigned to the busiest bus lines.

The new bus procurements include 94 articulated buses – the 60-foot Metro Liners, with 45 percent more seating capacity – and 100 45-foot buses with 15 percent more seating.

In addition, Metro is purchasing six hybrid 40-foot coaches that will run on gasoline and electricity.

The bus procurements will cost more than \$100 million, although the final purchase price will be determined once bids for the 45-foot coaches are received.

The Board also adjusted the FY 2005 budget to add a new pilot line, Express Line 577 X, which will connect the El Monte Transit Center, Cal State Long Beach and the Long Beach Veteran's Affairs Medical Center via the carpool lane on the 605 Freeway.

Finally, the Board adopted changes to Metro's Transit Service Policy to factor in Consent Decree compliance and determine the net benefit to transit dependent riders of proposed service changes.

Exceeds Consent Decree

With the purchase of the 200 new buses, Metro will far exceed recent orders under the federal Consent Decree.

In the past two years, Special Master Donald Bliss has ordered Metro to buy buses with seating capacity equivalent to 660 standard 40-foot buses (26,400 total passenger seats). Including recent procurements, Metro is buying the equivalent of 730 standard buses (29,198 seats).

"Many of these larger buses already are in service," noted CEO Roger Snoble.

Altogether, Metro has purchased more than 2,000 new buses since the Consent Decree was signed nine years ago.

Metro Bus service has expanded by more than 25 percent during peak hours, and new service such as Metro Rapid has been implemented along with a series of pilot lines.

