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Metro Releases Final Environmental Report on Expo Line

By RICK JAGER

(Oct. 11, 2005) Metro released the Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report (FEIS/FEIR) on the proposed Exposition Light Rail Transit Project, Tuesday, for a 45-day public circulation period.

Following the public review period, which ends Nov. 28, the Board is expected to certify the FEIS/FEIR in early December. After the Board's action, the Federal Transit Administration is expected to issue a Record of Decision (ROD), including environmental clearance.

FTA environmental clearance will enable the Exposition Construction Authority to award a contract for design and construction of the project, beginning in early 2006.

The Exposition Line will operate from downtown Los Angeles to Culver City. Because the \$640 million project will use local funding instead of federal New Starts funding, it can be built on an accelerated schedule for a June, 2010 completion.

'A major milestone'

"This is a major milestone as we move closer towards actual construction of this vital transportation project," said Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. "The Exposition Line continues the expansion of the county's rail transit system and will provide a viable alternative to driving."

The Exposition Line will be approximately 9 miles long and will share common track and two stations (7th and Metro and Pico/Chick Hearn) with the Metro Blue Line as it leaves downtown Los Angeles.

Just south of downtown, the line will proceed west on the Metro-owned right-of-way on Exposition Boulevard, which parallels the heavily congested I-10 Freeway, with a terminus at Venice and Robertson.

Approximately eight new stations will be constructed between downtown Los Angeles and Culver City. A future second phase would extend the Exposition line to Santa Monica.

The FEIS/FEIR will be available at community libraries located along the Exposition Line or on the web at www.metro.net.

Community open houses

Metro is planning to conduct three community open houses in November to review details of the project and receive comments on the FEIS/FEIR.

The meetings are scheduled for:

- Wednesday, Nov. 2 (5 - 8 p.m.), at Veterans Memorial Auditorium , 4117 Overland Ave., Culver City.
- Thursday, Nov. 3 (5 - 8 p.m.), at West Los Angeles Church, 3045 Crenshaw Blvd., Los Angeles.
- Wednesday, Nov. 9 (5 - 8 p.m.), at the Exposition Park Muses Room in the Wallis Annenberg Building, 700 State Drive, Los Angeles.