


[Home](#)
[CEO Hotline](#)
[Viewpoint](#)
[Classified Ads](#)
[Archives](#)
[Metro.net \(web\)](#)

Resources

[Safety](#)
[Pressroom \(web\)](#)
[Ask the CEO](#)
[CEO Forum](#)
[Employee Recognition](#)
[Employee Activities](#)
[Metro Projects](#)
[Facts at a Glance \(web\)](#)
[Archives](#)
[Events Calendar](#)
[Research Center/Library](#)
[Metro Classifieds](#)
[Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

[30/10 Initiative](#)
[Policies](#)
[Training](#)
[Help Desk](#)
[Intranet Policy](#)

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Board OKs Free Rides for LAPD Officers, TAP Funding, Video Cameras

(March 1, 2006) Free rides for LAPD officers, funding for the TAP program and new video cameras for Metro Rail cars were among motions approved by the Board in February.

The TAP motion included an amendment directing the staff to look into the feasibility and costs of a "barrier ticketing system" for the Metro Red Line, as well as "decriminalizing" fare invasion and creating "transit adjudication bureaus."

Item 11, Fare Exemption for LAPD. The Board approved a motion allowing LAPD officers in "Class A" dress uniforms with valid ID to ride the Metro Rail and Bus System free. Officers may not take seats from fare-paying customers and must fulfill their responsibilities as peace officers as circumstances may require.

The Board report notes that the presence of additional uniformed personnel "will help to increase vigilance against a variety of potential terrorist threats and provide an enhanced sense of safety and security to our patrons and employees."

Item 16, Regional Transit Access Pass. The Board voted to increase the life of project budget for TAP by \$4.4 million from \$16 million to a new total of \$20.4 million.

The motion authorized the CEO to award a nine-year, \$60.1 million contract for construction and operation of a TAP Regional Customer Service Center and Financial Clearinghouse.

The Board also approved an amendment by Supervisor Yvonne Burke that directs the CEO to report to the Board in April with recommendations, including a timeline, costs and potential funding sources, for a "barrier ticketing system" for the Metro Red Line.

The staff was directed to provide a financial analysis of cost savings of a barrier system compared with "the present escalating manpower costs associated with using fare inspectors...."

The motion also directs the staff to report on the feasibility of Metro-sponsored legislation to "decriminalize" fare evasion and the costs of establishing a "transit adjudication bureau" to process fare evasion violations, along with the potential revenue estimates for "cost recovery."

In her amendment, Burke said the "extremely high incidence of fare evasion scofflaws...puts a severe strain on the courts," citing "an average of 40 arrests (a day) just from MTA fare evasion-citation bench warrants." Decriminalizing the infractions and establishing "transit adjudication bureaus," she said, could "relieve the courts of

this burdensome task” and “provide for a greater cost recovery....”

Item 23, Universal Fare System. The Board voted to increase the Universal Fare System (UFS) life of project budget by \$4 million from \$93.6 million to \$97.6 million.

The motion authorizes the CEO to execute a \$3 million contract for additional UFS receiver vaults and farebox equipment for all Metro-contracted bus operations and \$1 million for rehabilitation of vaults and additional vault facilities at bus operating divisions and the Regional Rebuild Center.

Item 20, Rail Video Cameras. The Board approved a motion authorizing the CEO to execute an \$800,000 contract modification to provide a total of 346 additional video cameras for Metro Rail cars. Of those, 104 would be installed aboard Metro Red Line trains, while the remaining 242 would be installed aboard Metro Blue, Green and Gold Line trains.

Called In-Train CCTV, the 796-camera system will provide real-time security monitoring, graffiti and incident recording in the rail car interiors. The cameras will be able to store video and event data, and ensure prompt retrieval of saved information at any time.

Item 6, Bicycle Strategic Plan. The Board voted to approve two countywide bicycle planning documents. The Bicycle Transportation Strategic Plan, whose goal is to link bicycles to transit and to integrate bicycle facilities into transportation projects, will be used by local agencies. The Bicycle Transportation Account Compliance Document includes an inventory and mapping of existing and proposed bicycle facilities in the county.