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This aerial view, taken in 1989 when Division 12 was still active, shows its location at the intersection of the I-710 Freeway and 7th Street in Long Beach.

Photos courtesy of Dorothy Peyton Gray Transportation Library

Metro, Long Beach Reach Agreement on Sale of Division 12

- Sale won't be final until environmental study, possible cleanup of site

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Aug. 29, 2006) Metro has agreed to sell the 5.05-acre Division 12 property to the City of Long Beach, which plans to convert the site to parkland and create a greenbelt along the Los Angeles River.

The Long Beach City Council approved the \$3.95 million purchase, Aug. 8; Metro's Board of Directors had earlier approved the sale. The property is located at the intersection of 7th Street and the I-710 Freeway.

Before the sale can be finalized, says Real Estate Director Velma Marshall, Metro must retain an outside firm to conduct a study to determine the amount of environmental cleanup required. A cleanup of the site could take up to three years.

Once acquired by Long Beach, the property would link Drake Park on the north with Cesar E. Chavez Park on the south. The city also is looking at other properties, including five sites owned by the Union Pacific Railroad, to extend the greenbelt farther along the river.



This view of Division 12 from the early 1960s shows the maintenance facility in operation and looks north toward an adjacent housing development.

50-year history

For almost 50 years, Metro and its predecessor agencies have used Division 12 as either an operating division or a bus storage yard.

In early 1959, the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority worked out a land swap with the City of Long Beach and moved its Division 12 rail and bus operations to the current site.

When the last “Red Car” went out of service on April 8, 1961, the property was converted to a bus-only division with 85 coaches and 151 operators.

During the SCRTD and Metro years, Division 12 provided service to Long Beach and the South Bay, operating Lines 60, 232 and 445, among others.

Metro closed Division 12 as an active division on June 30, 1997. Since then, the site has been used to prepare decommissioned buses for sale and, on occasion, as the location where active fleet buses were taken for installation of new fareboxes or other equipment.

About 100 decommissioned buses currently are stored at Division 12, according to Equipment Maintenance Manager Pat Astredo. Last week, Metro sold more than 50 buses, mostly for scrap. In September, the agency will offer some 70 buses for sale, most of which are in operating condition.