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## Metro Board Approves 65-Foot Metro Liner for Evaluation

BY DAVE SOTERO

(Jan. 26, 2007) The Metro Board approved a \$100,000 addition to the agency's existing contract with North American Bus Industries, Inc., Thursday, allowing the company to produce one 65-foot articulated Metro Liner demonstration bus that will accommodate nine additional seated passengers and up to five standing passengers.

The action is in response to greater than anticipated customer demand for Metro Orange Line service. The 65-foot NABI bus is expected to be completed and ready for evaluation this summer. If it meets Metro's requirements, it could be phased into Orange Line service in the future.

The new vehicle will also contain upgraded frameless windows, adding to its visual appeal. NABI can produce such a vehicle without significant cost, technical or mechanical challenges.

Earlier this week, Metro was granted an exemption from Caltrans to permit operation of the 65-foot vehicle expressly on the Orange Line transitway.

Metro continues to evaluate new bus technologies, including an 80-foot design that would contain double articulated joints and even greater seating capacity.

In related service improvements, Metro Orange Line service frequency improved from five minutes to four minutes during peak service hours as of Jan. 21.

