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Metro Store to Raffle Free Globetrotters Tickets > The Metro Store will conduct a free employee drawing for Globetrotters tickets. Three family 4-packs to any of the local games will be raffled off. Employees can enter the drawing from through Feb. 9 at the Metro Store, located on the Plaza Level of the Gateway Building. The winners will be chosen at 3 p.m. on Feb. 9. Globetrotters appearances are scheduled at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 17, at the Honda Center in Anaheim and 1 p.m., Monday, Feb. 19, at the Staples Center.

Globetrotters Spin Basketball Magic for Metro Rail Commuters

PHOTOS BY JUAN OCAMPO



Globetrotters Nate Loftin, left, 6'9" center from southeastern Louisiana, and Anthony Blakes, 6'2" guard from Wyoming, dribble their way from the East Portal to Staples Center on board Metro Rail.

- Players Blakes and Loftin dribble their way to Staples Center

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Feb. 1, 2007) Metro Rail General Manager Gerald Francis may be able to make the trains run on time, but spinning a basketball on his index finger? Well, that needs a little work.

In fairness to Francis, it's hard to compete with the Harlem Globetrotters at basketball tricks, but he gave it the ol' college try, Thursday morning, during an event in the Union Station East Portal that tied the team's local

appearances and the benefits of using mass transit.



Rail GM Gerald Francis gives professional basketball a spin.

To help promote transit, Globetrotters guard Anthony Blakes and center Nate Loften dribbled their way from the East Portal onto a waiting Metro Red Line train, then to the 7th and Metro station where – still dribbling – they switched to a Metro Blue Line train for the short trip to the Pico Station near Staples Center.

Metro's Edith Goff-Youngblood bounces one off Globetrotter Blakes as the Los Angeles Times photographer gets the shot.



Some commuters stopped to take cell phone photos with the brightly dressed players, who also handed out free game tickets. With a squad of photographers snapping pictures, the Globetrotters performed their basketball magic as curious commuters filed past.

One routine had each player challenging the other to a series of intricate maneuvers rolling the ball around their shoulders and arms. It ended with Blakes balancing the spinning basketball on the fingertip of Metro's Edith Goff-Youngblood.



Media Frenzy: Globetrotters get the ball rolling in the atrium of the East Portal as cameras whirr, flash and snap.

A Globetrotters game

Francis, who played point guard on his high school basketball teams in Chicago and again for a couple of years at Creighton University in Omaha, Neb., recalled attending a Globetrotters game as a kid.

The famous Meadowlark Lemon was chasing an opposing player around the court with what Francis and his buddy thought was a bucket of water. Lemon threw the contents over the crowd where the two were sitting.

“I didn’t know it was just confetti in the bucket, so my friend and I bumped heads,” Francis said. “We both went home with knots on our heads, but it was fun.”



Metro Moment: Globetrotters Anthony Blakes, left, and Nate Lofton share the court with TOS Luis Alcantar and TOS Jeannette Mayo of Bus Operations Control.

Francis may have to work on his ball spinning, but he can draw inspiration from the red, white and blue wristbands presented to him by Blakes and Lofton.

In a short address to the crowd gathered in the East Portal, Blakes noted that the Globetrotters earned the title “Ambassadors of Good Will” during their many years of appearances in venues around the world.

“Our scouts not only look for great basketball players,” he said, “they look for great people.”



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LA City Council OKs Park/Ride Lot at Blue Line’s 103rd St. Station



Cultural attractions abound at the 103rd Street Station of the Metro Blue Line: The Watts Cultural Crescent, the historic Watts Train Station, the Watts Towers, the Watts Towers Art Center and Amphitheater, and the Alma Reeves Woods-Watts Public Library

(Feb. 1, 2007) The Los Angeles City Council approved the execution of a contract, Wednesday, to build a 63-space park/ride lot at the Metro Blue Line’s 103rd Street station in Watts.

The Cultural Crescent parking lot will include pedestrian amenities, security fencing, decorative paving, bike racks, art and landscaping. Metro provided \$497,345 of the \$1,123,959 total project budget through the Call for Projects.

Construction will begin in March with the park/ride lot, located on Grandee Avenue between 103rd Street and 106th Street, to open this summer. A second phase of the project, to be constructed at a later date, will add another 62 parking spaces.



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TOS Leslie Elliott, working the window at Division 15, gives Operator Martin Perez his route assignment -- often called a "paddle" or "running board" for the day.



Photos: Ned Racine

Division Paper Records will be TOAST with New Software System

- Two-year project will automate bus and rail operator assignments and scheduling

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Feb. 2, 2007) In an age when computers routinely record, analyze and report employee time, work assignments and scheduling, supervisors at Metro's operating divisions are still doing many of those time-consuming tasks the old-fashioned way -- with pen and paper.

The daily comings and goings of bus and rail operators, whether they are on vacation or sick leave, who's on call to fill in for an absent operator, and myriad other details are recorded by hand.

Then, the information is entered into a computer program called TOTS, the Transit Operator Trends System.

"This was necessary back when computers were often quite unreliable and it was prudent to have a paper backup," says Ed Muncy, director of Service Performance Analysis. "Nowadays, computers are extremely reliable and TOTS is outdated."

Muncy and a team that includes members from Operations, Information Management, Safety, Human Resources and the operating divisions are

working on a project to implement a state-of-the-art computer software program with accompanying hardware that will replace TOTS and bring a new level of efficiency to the record-keeping system.



TOS Karla Aleman makes a final check of paperwork accumulated during a day's operation at Division 15. Division supervisors who handle the "markup" function are responsible for recording operator time, vacation, sick leave, absences and other personnel information.

The project's name is TOAST – Transit Operator Activity Scheduling and Tracking. The \$7.6 million project was approved by the Board in May, 2006 and really began to pick up steam in December, 2006 with the awarding of a contract to Giro, Inc., of Montreal.

Giro also designed and markets the HASTUS bus scheduling software system to the transit industry, including Metro.

Maintenance has M3 system

The new tracking system won't include maintenance employees, who's time and task records already are recorded in the M3 system. M3 also provides data on vehicle maintenance and parts inventory management.

Giro's software system currently is in use by transit agencies in Oakland, San Diego, Phoenix and Long Beach, and other medium-sized properties. It also is employed in Montreal, which has some 1,600 buses, and by a Scandinavian transit agency that operates about 6,000 buses.

The TOAST project will have the most impact on the transportation operations supervisors (TOS) who are responsible for "markup" and "window" tasks at the operating divisions.

TOSs who perform "markup" post weekly bus and rail operator schedules and provide substitute operators to fill work assignments left vacant by illness, vacation or other reasons. "Window" TOSs issue the bus line route and time point documents, called "paddles" or "running boards," to operators making the daily rollouts.

The new software will maintain rosters and assignments for the 4,000 bus and rail operators at Metro's 15 operating divisions. It will take into account employee absences, vacations, sick leave, call backs and other information needed by a TOS to draw up daily work schedules and assignments.

With the new system, Muncy believes TOSs will be more efficient, make better decisions and will be able to spend more time with employees. "If we free them from the paperwork, they can do more supervision."

Acquire, configure and test

Between now and August 2008, the TOAST team will be acquiring, configuring and testing the hardware and software needed for the new

system.

In October 2008, the system will be installed as a prototype at an operating division – probably Central City Division 1. After the system passes all tests at Division 1, the TOAST team will begin installing the equipment at the remaining 14 bus and rail divisions.

During the installation period – lasting about three weeks per division – the staff at each division will receive comprehensive training on using the new software.

The equipment will include not only computers for TOS use, but also at least three kiosks at every division where operators will sign in, receive their work assignments and any work-related messages posted since their last work period.

The TOAST team is planning a call-in system with an automated interactive voice that will relay assignment information.

Muncy also expects the new software will eventually give bus and rail operators the ability to check their work assignments from home by accessing the system through the Intranet.

With the complexity of the hardware and software, the need to install the system at the operating divisions and at Metro Headquarters, and taking into account the extensive testing and the employee training, Muncy says the TOAST project won't be completed until early 2009.

"It takes a long time to get everything situated because you have a lot of technology that has to work together," he explains. And he notes that since the wages for bus and rail operators amount to about \$240 million a year, "you don't want to goof that up."


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State Transportation Commission OKs \$167 Mill. Repayment to Metro

- Last installment on a \$236 million funding commitment

(Feb. 2, 2007) The California Transportation Commission (CTC) voted, Thursday, to repay \$167 million to Metro for funds the agency used for construction of the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension.

The state was unable to provide the funding during its budget crisis in 2005. The CTC had authorized Metro in May, 2005 to use local funding instead of state funds to keep the Eastside project on track.

The CTC was able to repay the Traffic Congestion Relief Program funds – the last installment on a \$236 million funding commitment – after voters last November approved Proposition 1A.

Prop 1A requires that gasoline tax revenues previously borrowed by the state for use in the General Fund, rather than for transportation-related projects, must be repaid within ten years.

Metro will put the state's \$167 million repayment to work immediately by replacing the local funds that were used to build the Eastside Extension.

Those funds included money originally programmed for the I-5 widening project from the Orange County line to I-605 and for a canceled cycle of the Call for Projects.



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50-Cent Fares Designed to Tempt New Riders Onto Metro Buses

By NED RACINE

(Feb. 6, 2007) From Feb. 18 to 24, Metro will reduce bus fares to 50 cents on 18 bus lines in a rare promotion to encourage potential customers to sample those lines.

Selected by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Metro Service Planning and the Service Sectors, the 18 lines spread throughout Los Angeles County, including lines reaching cities from San Pedro to La Cañada.

Radio and newspaper advertisements, using the theme "Try the Best for Less," encourage drivers to skip driving headaches and test Metro buses.

"We do many different route promotions," said Warren Morse, DEO, Communications. "What sets this promotion apart is these lines run from one end of the county to the other. We're hoping a reduced fare will mean drivers weary of high gas prices and traffic will give Metro a try."

The 50-cent test ride promotion grew from discussions with the Board, which directed the agency to achieve a five percent annual ridership increase over the next three years.

Metro Bus lines target for the 50 Cents Test Rides promotion are Line 102, Line 127, Line 154, Line 168, Line 177, Line 201, Line 202, Line 209, Line 214, Line 220, Line 233, Line 258, Line 265, Line 275, Line 305, Line 550, Line 577X and Line 761.



Image from display advertisement appearing in local newspapers.




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President's 2008 Budget Includes Eastside Extension, Metro Rapid Funding

- \$80 million for the Eastside, \$16.7 million for Metro Rapid

By DAVE SOTERO

(Feb. 6, 2007) President Bush's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2008 includes funding for key transportation projects in Los Angeles County, including the Metro Gold Line Light Rail Extension and new Metro Rapid lines.

The new budget calls for \$80 million for the continued construction of the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension, scheduled to open in late 2009. The funding is consistent with the funding outlined in that project's Full Funding Grant Agreement.

"I am pleased that the federal government's budget for next year includes \$80 million for the Eastside Light Rail Project," said Board Chair Gloria Molina. "Metro will put these federal dollars to hard work as we continue to build a much-needed rail link between the Eastside and the rest of Los Angeles County."

Also included in the budget is \$16.7 million for the Metro Rapid Bus System Gap Closure Small Starts project, which seeks to reduce passenger end-to-end trip times along eight new Metro Rapid Corridors.

New Metro Rapid Lines to be established are: West Olympic, Garvey-Chavez, Manchester, Atlantic, San Fernando South, South Sepulveda, Torrance-Long Beach and Central.

The proposed lines have been identified for their potential to reduce travel time throughout the existing Metro Rapid Bus system. The project, which utilizes existing buses, will add 247 new stations along 120 miles of new bus routes. When the project is complete in 2008, it is expected to attract 40,000 new daily riders, and accommodate a total of 123,000 boardings each weekday.

'A vote of confidence'

"Metro's Rapid Program received a big stamp of approval today from Washington, D.C.," said CEO Roger Snoble. "The fact that the President's budget includes over \$16 million for expanding the Metro Rapid system is a vote of confidence that we are building an innovative, user-friendly and rapid bus network in our region."

The President's budget allocates \$175 million for transit security grants nationwide, which is the same amount appropriated by Congress last year, and includes \$12 million for intercity bus security grants. Funding for AMTRAK has been set at \$800 million.

These funding provisions are part of a \$2.9 trillion federal budget that is now under review on Capitol Hill. Congress will deliberate the budget later this spring.

Although the President's budget has good news for Metro, the American Public Transportation Association said it was "extremely disappointed" that the budget request is \$308 million below the amount "authorized and guaranteed" in the FY 2008 SAFETY-LU, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportatio Equity Act – A Legacy for Users.

APTA is asking Congress to set public transit funding at the \$9.731 billion level authorized under SAFETY-LU in FY 2008.

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Waxman Bill to Repeal Subway Funding Restriction Passes U.S. House

- Boxer, Feinstein file companion measure in the Senate
- If signed into law, the legislation would permit extension of the subway past Wilshire/Western

(Feb. 7, 2007) The U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation, Wednesday, to repeal the 20-year-old prohibition on federal funding for subway tunneling in the Wilshire Corridor.

Speaking on the floor of the House, Congressman Henry Waxman, who sponsored the measure – H.R. 238 – said he had been assured that “it is technically feasible to handle the tunneling in a very safe manner....”

Citing safety concerns following an 1985 explosion and fire at the Ross Dress for Less store in the Wilshire/Fairfax district, Waxman sponsored legislative language in 1986 that prevented federal funding for further subway construction along Wilshire.

House Transportation Committee Chairman James Oberstar (D-Minn.) urged passage of H.R. 238 on Wednesday, noting that a process had been put into place “...by which the tunneling can continue in all safety to those doing the tunneling and to those above ground.”

The measure was passed on a 2/3rds voice vote by members of the House.

On Tuesday, U.S. Senators Barbara Boxer and Diane Feinstein filed legislation in the Senate as a companion to Waxman’s bill. If the bills are successful in both chambers, the legislation will go to the President for signature before becoming law.

Funds for subway extension

That would permit the use of federal funds to extend the subway past Wilshire/Western – an action the Metro Board has strongly supported and Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa has called “the subway to the sea.”

Statement from CEO Roger Snoble:

“Metro welcomes House passage of Congressman Henry Waxman’s bill. We are glad the House voted to repeal a longstanding prohibition on the use of federal funds for subway tunneling in Los Angeles. A world-class panel of independent experts agreed in November 2005 that Metro can tunnel safely along the Wilshire Corridor. Today’s vote in Congress affirms the findings of this panel and opens the possibility of securing federal money to extend our subway westward to help alleviate the area’s crushing traffic congestion.”

"Today is a good day for Los Angeles," Boxer said following filing of the Senate bill. "This subway project is another important step to decreasing congestion in Los Angeles. We've been told this project can be done safely, so it's time to move forward."

"Severe gridlock is a reality faced by millions of residents in Los Angeles every day," said Feinstein. "But plans to expand the city's Metro Red Line and to offer direct connections from Downtown Los Angeles to the Pacific Ocean were delayed for more than 20 years because of serious safety concerns. Experts have now assured us that tunneling technologies have improved sufficiently to allay those concerns. It's time to make this project a reality."

Waxman included the original language restricting federal funding for subway construction in the 1986 Department of Transportation Appropriations Act following the Ross Dress for Less explosion and fire.

Investigators later found that methane gas seeping into an auxiliary room of the store had caused the explosion, which blew out windows and partially collapsed the building's roof. At least 21 people were injured in the blast, two critically burned.

In 2005, Waxman worked with Villaraigosa to appoint a five-member panel of independent tunneling experts to review the subway tunneling proposal.

In November 2005, the panel reported that tunneling along Wilshire and operation of subway trains west of Western Avenue could be done safely using new tunneling technology.

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Qatar Official Discusses Security with TSB Deputies



(Feb. 7, 2007) Members of the Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau (TSB) greet Lt. Col. Mohamed Abdulaziz Al-Nassr (center), security attaché of the Washington, D.C. embassy of the State of Qatar. Al-Nassr visited Metro, Tuesday, to discuss transit security measures with Sheriff's deputies. According to Al-Nassr, traffic congestion in its expanding cities has forced Qatar to plan light rail lines in the Persian Gulf monarchy. At right, Sheriff's Deputy Devin Vanderlaan shows Lt. Col. Al-Nassr photos of Metro buses and trains defaced by graffiti. Vanderlaan also displayed tagged glass and tagging tools to explain the challenge facing deputies who patrol the Metro system.



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House Transportation Committee Chairman James Oberstar (D-Minn.) urged passage of H.R. 238 on Wednesday, noting that a process had been put into place “...by which the tunneling can continue in all safety to those doing the tunneling and to those above ground.”

The measure was passed on a 2/3rds voice vote by members of the House.

On Tuesday, U.S. Senators Barbara Boxer and Diane Feinstein filed legislation in the Senate as a companion to Waxman’s bill. If the bills are successful in both chambers, the legislation will go to the President for signature before becoming law.

Funds for subway extension

That would permit the use of federal funds to extend the subway past Wilshire/Western – an action the Metro Board has strongly supported and Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa has called “the subway to the sea.”

“Today is a good day for Los Angeles,” Boxer said following filing of the Senate bill. “This subway project is another important step to decreasing congestion in Los Angeles. We’ve been told this project can be done safely, so it’s time to move forward.”

Statement from CEO Roger Snoble:

“Metro welcomes House passage of Congressman Henry Waxman’s bill. We are glad the House voted to repeal a longstanding prohibition on the use of federal funds for subway tunneling in Los Angeles. A world-class panel of independent experts agreed in November 2005 that Metro can tunnel safely along the Wilshire Corridor. Today’s vote in Congress affirms the

"Severe gridlock is a reality faced by millions of residents in Los Angeles every day," said Feinstein. "But plans to expand the city's Metro Red Line and to offer direct connections from Downtown Los Angeles to the Pacific Ocean were delayed for more than 20 years because of serious safety concerns. Experts have now assured us that tunneling technologies have improved sufficiently to allay those concerns. It's time to make this project a reality."

Waxman included the original language restricting federal funding for subway construction in the 1986 Department of Transportation Appropriations Act following the Ross Dress for Less explosion and fire.

Investigators later found that methane gas seeping into an auxiliary room of the store had caused the explosion, which blew out windows and partially collapsed the building's roof. At least 21 people were injured in the blast, two critically burned.

In 2005, Waxman worked with Villaraigosa to appoint a five-member panel of independent tunneling experts to review the subway tunneling proposal.

In November 2005, the panel reported that tunneling along Wilshire and operation of subway trains west of Western Avenue could be done safely using new tunneling technology.

findings of this panel and opens the possibility of securing federal money to extend our subway westward to help alleviate the area's crushing traffic congestion."

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The Pups for Peace staff, clad in dark blue, are shown during a recent training session with Israeli police in Jerusalem.



Deputies Travel to Israel for Security Training with 'Pups for Peace'

By ELIZABETH LEIDER

(Feb 8, 2007) Deputies Richard Faulk and David Cervantes of the Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau flew to Israel on Tuesday. They will train with Israeli police and a program called "Pups for Peace" to learn patrol procedures and tactics for working with explosive-detection dogs on mass transit systems.

Pups for Peace is a non-profit organization headquartered in Israel with offices in the United States and other locations around the world. According to the organization's website it is "dedicated to reducing death and injury through the use of explosive-detection dogs".

Near the completion of the program, Lt. Rick Craig and Sgt. David Wessol will join the deputies in Israel to attend their graduation and for a tour of the Pups for Peace facilities.

When Faulk and Cervantes return to Los Angeles, they will bring with them dogs that were trained at the Pups for Peace headquarters. These dogs and their handlers will patrol Metro's transit systems.

In addition, Faulk and Cervantes will share their newly acquired knowledge about patrol procedures and tactics with the rest of the LASD K-9 team.

"We're excited about the opportunity to make history as one of the first transit agencies in the nation to have Pups for Peace canines deployed," said Transit Police Chief Cmdr. Dan Finkelstein. "We're also thankful to the Governor's Office of Homeland Security for financing the program, and to Pups for Peace for bringing it all together."

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Employees Went 'Above and Beyond the Call of Duty' During Ford Services



San Fernando Valley General Manager Richard Hunt, center, Sector Assistant Transportation Manager George Trudeau and Division 15 Transportation Manager Gary Spivack, at right, congratulate the bus operators and mechanics who helped transport the public at memorial services for U.S. President Gerald R. Ford in Palm Desert. Below, Trudeau, at right, and Hunt join with Division 8 Transportation Manager Maria Reynolds and Division 8 personnel. Photos by Ned Racine.



Valley Sector Honors Employees at Division 8, Division 15

- See Jan. 5 report: [Metro Heeded Call to Duty at Ford Memorial in Palm Desert](#)

By JORI STERN

(Feb. 8, 2007) San Fernando Valley Divisions 8 and 15 recently honored 21 employees who went "above and beyond the call of duty" during a national period of mourning.

The Feb. 1 ceremonies honored 30 metro employees with certificates of appreciation presented by sector General Manager Richard Hunt.

On Dec. 29, while the nation mourned former President Gerald R. Ford, 18 buses, 30 operators and two tow trucks left Division 15 for Palm Desert, where he lay in repose. They had been assigned to help provide shuttle services for the hundreds of mourners expected to pay their respects to Ford.

In remarks at the Valley divisions, Hunt pointed out that many of the employees transporting mourners at the Ford funeral also volunteered during the 1984 Olympics and the 1994 Northridge earthquake. In those cases, he said, the public hailed employees as going "above and beyond the call of duty."

President Ford's funeral was no exception. "It truly required a special effort and it worked out with no blemishes," Hunt said.

George Trudeau, assistant transportation

Participants in Gerald R. Ford Memorial Services

West Valley Division 8: *

Anthony Bryant * Jeffery Cummins
* Joseph DeMelo * Kamran Firouzi
* Robert Higbee * Frank Marino *
Phillip McCown * Humberto
Munguia * Victor Pages * Luis
Santos * Harjot Singh * Matthew
Smiley * Lawrence Thomas *
Eduardo Uvals * Saeid Vahedi *
Jojie Velasquez * **East Valley**

Division 15: * Vachik Ebrahimian

* Fernando Garcia * Nicole Jiho *
Alvaro Jimenez * Crystal Leonard
* Daniel Magana * Librada
Martinez * Rafael Melgar * James
Nichols * Dagaberto Rodriguez *
Tino Rodriguez * Juan Rosas *
Juan Salazar * Timothy Swayne *
Michael Turner * Renee Williams *
Derald Wright * **Transportation**

Operations Supervisors: *

Luis
Alcantar * Karla Aleman * John
Dover * Charles Jenkins * Ovidiu
Mateescu * Russ Modell * Harvey
Thomas * Xavier Varela * **Fleet**

Management and Support

Services personnel: * Sean
Dunning * Pete Gamino * Keith
Nielsen * Paul Rankin

manager, added to that sentiment: "In my 33 years with this company, I have never been more proud to work with the gentlemen and the ladies that were out there. You guys were absolutely shining."

How do Metro employees feel about participating in such a huge event?

An honor to be asked

While many believed it was an honor just to be asked, others thought it was their duty. Still others liked the feeling of participating in a history-making event.

Operator Jeff Cummins said simply, "He was a special President and it was an honor to do it. I would most definitely be there again."

Operator Joseph De Melo liked being part of history. "It was just a mammoth time."

"Very somber," said Operator Jojie Velasquez. Echoing Cummins, Velasquez said, "I did it for Reagan, I did it for Ford, and I would gladly participate in any event that they asked me to again."

"We don't just operate the equipment, we're service providers to the community," said Operator Robert Higbee. "It was fun too, to be caught up in a national media event, with the cameras and the American flags, and the Secret Service guys. You think you're no big deal, but then you get to participate in something unique that a lot of people aren't a part of. There's a little ego boost there."

Maria Reynolds, Division 8 transpiration manager, summed up how she felt at the end of the ceremony. "I am very proud of our operators, and for the work that they did. We have the best in the system."

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On board one of Metro's fully equipped tow trucks, Field Equipment Technician Keith Nielsen inspects Cummins engine.



Photos by Ned Racine

On the Run: Field Equipment Technicians Keep Metro Buses Rolling

- FETs work under pressure from operators, motorists, impatient riders and cops

By NED RACINE

(Feb. 9, 2007) Beneath Metro's network of buses and trains that move thousands of passengers across Los Angeles County every day works another network of dispatchers, mechanics and technicians who keep hundreds of vehicles ready for service.

Field equipment technicians (FETs) are the trapeze artists of that supporting web, repairing vehicles that failed during their workday, sometimes slowing the traffic flow the vehicles are intended to reduce. FETs often labor under the glare of bus operators, riders and motorists. Law enforcement officers encourage the FETs to move Metro's vehicles from freeways and roads quickly.

Manny Zaragosa, who works from the Regional Rebuild Center (RCC), has 30 years with Metro, 24 years as an FET. Zaragosa works the p.m. shift beginning at noon. "Most every guy that's here has a



FET Manny Zaragosa checks the assignment board at RRC.

lot of time [with the agency] because the job is very interesting," he said. "It's something different every single day."

The FETs also take professional pride in the speed with which they can get

a broken bus moving from roads and freeways.

1,800 service calls each year

When Zaragosa began working as an FET, three were assigned to the a.m. shift and three assigned to the p.m. shift. Now each shift has seven FETs, Monday through Friday. The RRC FETs handle approximately 1,800 service calls each year from the South Bay, Hollywood, San Fernando Valley, East Los Angeles and all bus terminals.

Mickel Dobravolskis, also an FET, finds a different reward. "When there's a bunch of people standing there on the side of the road because the bus broke down, you fix it; everyone gets on the bus, and they all cheer, and it's very rewarding."

"A lot of times, by the time Control has the call, if we're monitoring our screen, we can actually see the call come up," explained Oscar D'Agostino, a mechanic. "Operators can use the M3 program to view the history of a bus. It gives us an idea, so we're prepared mentally, by the time we get there."



FET Oscar D'Agostino at the wheel.

Major failure

On Jan. 30, Keith Nielsen, a mechanic A, towed an articulated bus that had basically broken in two. Equipment Maintenance Manager Patrick Astredo called the breakdown a major failure. Working with the Division 5 maintenance crew, Nielsen was able to get the bus back to the division.

"So, he is kind of a go-to guy when things are really bad," Astredo said of Nielsen, a Metro employee for 27 years, 10 of those spent towing buses.



Mechanic A Keith Nielsen's 31,500-pound tow truck, one of 11 Metro owns, can tow any bus.

Nielsen's 31,500-pound tow truck, one of 11 Metro owns, can tow any bus. A recent addition to the fleet, the tow trucks feature a mechanical arm, called a "reach." With the reach, Nielsen's truck only needs to be within five feet of a bus to be able to tow it.

"It's a major concern for the public and safety when a vehicle is on the side of the street or on the freeway or something like that, something other than is normally out there, that is a real problem for Metro," Nielsen said.

It's Friday afternoon and George Perez, an FET also working the p.m. shift from the RCC, is driving a GMC W4500, vehicle 20-1100. The passenger seat has been removed and replaced with computers and radios. This is not Perez's usual truck. His usual truck is being serviced at Division 4.

Providing a soundtrack to Perez's workday, his radio calls out service requests: *Control Nine to M152.*



FET George Perez arrives on the scene with his trusted repair truck to quickly diagnose then repair engine troubles of Metro Local 6387.

'Engine stalled. Thanks a bunch.'

Perez's first request for service, complete with the bus's location, appears on his computer screen at 1:09 p.m. The text describes the problem and ends with, "Engine stalled. Thanks a bunch," a sign of the camaraderie among the FETs and the bus control center dispatchers.

Just east of Vignes on 1st Street, Metro Local 6387 waits silently. Stranded are Eloise Allen, Division 10 operator, and approximately 25 riders. The stalled coach pinches the 1st Street traffic.

Perez springs from his truck and quickly diagnoses 6387's electronics. "No voltage," he says. "Dead time." he opens a service panel on the bus's right rear as another bus arrives to pick up the stranded riders.

Perez discovers the number 65 electronic control module has unscrewed itself. He tightens the offending electronics, and the bus is ready to be driven off by its relief operator.

Not all repair calls take the FETs far from base. Danny Haynes, a Division 18 operator, calls to report that the passenger-side mirror of his NABI articulated bus keeps slipping out of position, despite his adjustments. He meets Perez around 2 p.m. in the RCC parking lot.

Perez devotes 20 minutes to diagnosing and then tightening the mirror, despite its warped center bolt, and sends coach 8027 back to its Metro Rapid route. "If he's happy, I'm happy," says Perez, who is nearing 30 years with Metro.



Perez tightens the passenger-side mirror of Metro Rapid articulated coach out of South Bay Division.

Operator reports door won't close

Perez's next call concerns Metro Bus 5403, which should have been transporting riders on busy Line 200. Instead, Division 2 Operator Guadalupe Urrea waits for Perez at her layover zone at Hill Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. Her front door will not close.

Opening a service door under the operator's side window, Perez explains that Urrea's bus will not go in gear unless there is air pressure to the door. Perez finds a problem valve in the air line. A replacement part would be in his usual truck, but there's not one in the reserve truck he drives this day.

While Perez returns to the RCC for the replacement valve, he receives a service request for Metro Local 5422, also parked in the Line 200 layover zone about 50 feet behind Urrea's bus.

Division 2 Operator Celestine Johnson reports coolant leaking from the rear of her coach. For Johnson and Urrea, these are their first mechanical problems on Line 200.

Bus stalled on the Santa Monica Freeway near the 405 with 18 passengers, the radio squawks.

"The reason you have to be really top-notch out there, is because when you get out there, you don't really have time to be guessing," Nielsen said.

"The people who appreciate what we do are the operators themselves, because they are the ones on the front lines, like we are," Perez said. "They are the ones who know if we help them or we don't help them."

Bus will not start. Stranded bus 5308. Low psi.

And FET George Perez is off on his next call.



It's always something. FET George Perez on the job.



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Man Accused in Subway Mercury Spill Pleads Not Guilty

(Feb. 9, 2007) A transient accused in the mercury spill at the Pershing Square Metro Rail station in December pleaded not guilty, Thursday, to misdemeanor charges, City News Service reported.

Armando Bustamante Miranda, 27, was charged with one count of releasing an offensive or harmful substance in a public area and carrying a toxic material in a public transit facility.

If convicted, Bustamante Miranda could face up to a year in jail and a \$2,250 fine, according to prosecutors. Now being held on \$45,000 bail, he also faces an unrelated parole violation allegation, authorities said.

Sheriff's detectives arrested the suspect, Jan. 23, after identifying him through surveillance video footage. That Dec. 22 footage showed a man who appeared to drop a bottle of liquid on the subway platform. When the bottle broke, the man went to a nearby call box and reported the spill.

Mercury is considered a hazardous substance that can contaminate the air and can cause injuries, but the Sheriff's HAZMAT team determined that the amount spilled on the platform was not enough to injure anyone.

The spill was cleaned up the next day, but the delay sparked an investigation about a month later and led to hazardous materials response training classes for all Metro Rail personnel.

The results of the investigation, which concluded the spill was not a terrorist act, were referred to City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo's Environmental Justice Unit, which brought charges against Bustamante Miranda.

The suspect also faces felony charges in an unrelated matter, Delgadillo's office said.



Armando Bustamante Miranda, 27, is being held on \$45,000 bail in the mercury spill case.



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Black History Month celebrations at Metro will conclude with a performance of the Metro Choir, Feb. 28, on the Plaza level of the Gateway Building.



Black History Month Begins With Presentation on Messages in Music

By NED RACINE

(Feb. 11, 2007) Black History Month 2007 offers nourishment for the body and soul with events ranging from an examination of the messages in hip-hop music to a concluding performance of the Metro Choir.

Events begin with tomorrow's multimedia presentation by Damien Schnyder on the critiques of American society found in hip-hop music. Metro's African American Employees Association sponsors Black History Month programs.

Schnyder, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Texas at Austin, will employ slides and video to illustrate his "The Message in the Music" presentation. Schnyder will present his talk from noon to 1 p.m. in the Gateway Building's 3rd Floor Board Overflow Conference Room.

Next Thursday, Feb. 15, speaker Wanda Moore will offer an examination of former Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley with "The Untold Legacy of Tom Bradley." Moore, who served as executive assistant to the five-term mayor, offers her personal perspective from noon to 1 p.m. in the Gateway Building's 3rd Floor Union Station Conference Room.

The following Thursday, Feb. 22, a soul food buffet luncheon in the 4th Floor Wilshire Conference Room will feature baked or fried chicken, collard greens, several salads, and peach cobbler. Tickets for the luncheon, to be held from 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., are \$10.

Tickets are available

Tickets can be purchased from Bonnie Bradford, 922-4634; Susan Dove, 922-7451; Keith Hanson, 922-4727; or Dietra Thompson, text at 323-707-1698. A very limited number of tickets will be sold at the door.

Following the luncheon; Pat Lane-Goodson, senior contract administrator, will join tour guide Julien Dothard in discussing their recent journey to Kenya and Tanganyika. "Journey to Africa" takes place from noon to 1:00 p.m., in the 4th Floor Westside Conference Room.

While on safari to meet wildlife and indigenous people, Land-Goodson was moved by how animals and people live side-by-side in peace. "Now I understand why people say 'Once you go to Africa, you'll always come back.' "

Land-Goodson and Dothard will display carvings, jewelry, and paintings gathered during their journey through East Africa.

Black History Month concludes with a performance of the Metro Choir, Feb. 28, on the Plaza level of the Gateway Building. Featuring the Rev. Eric P. Lee, executive director, Southern Christian Leadership Conference of Greater Los Angeles, the event will include drummers, guest soloists and a military tribute.

For more information about Black History Month events, contact Susan Dove at 922-7451 or Keith Hanson at 922-4727.

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Los Angeles County Supervisor and Metro Board Chair Gloria Molina, center, with Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, front row, at left, and Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, center, back row, join a host of Los Angeles officials and civic leaders to break ground for a \$600 million development adjacent to the Hollywood/Vine Metro Rail Station in Hollywood.



Photos by Gary Leonard

\$600 million development at Red Line station to include affordable and luxury housing, 305-room W Hotel, W Residences and retail

- Groundbreaking on Major Joint Development at Hollywood & Vine

By DAVE SOTERO

(Feb. 13, 2007) Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, and a host of Metro and community officials joined representatives of two national real estate developers, Monday, to officially break ground at Hollywood and Vine on one of the largest mixed-use, transit-oriented developments in Los Angeles.

The \$600 million project will include a 305-room luxury W Hotel, 143 W Residences, 375 rental apartments (including 78 affordable units), approximately 50,000 square feet of retail space and transit plaza improvements at the Hollywood/Vine Metro Red Line station.

Construction is expected to take approximately 26 months, with completion targeted for the second quarter 2009.



Dream Team: Roger Snoble, Metro CEO; Roger Moliere, Chief, Real Property Management and Development, Metro; Marty Collins, President, Gatehouse Capital; Jeff Cohen, Gatehouse Capital; Greg Angelo, Director of Real Property Management and Development, Metro.

The development, to be built by Gatehouse Capital Corporation of Dallas and Legacy Partners of Foster City, Calif., is the result of five years of planning, negotiation and collaboration with Metro, the Community Redevelopment Agency, the Los Angeles City Council and the Hollywood community.

"It has been a labor of love and patience, but well worth both the time and money," said Marty Collins, president and CEO of Gatehouse Capital.

'City of Dreams'

"This project fulfills many of the goals I've identified if we are to realize the 'City of Our Dreams,'" said Mayor Anthony Villaraigosa. "This development embodies the principles of smart planning and growth. We need to encourage these types of projects to make LA a more livable city for people who work here, for employers staking their futures here and for the families who want to grow here."

The project will be developed on almost the entire city block bounded by Hollywood Boulevard to the north, Vine Street to the west, Selma Avenue to the south and Argyle Avenue to the east. The historic Taft Building is located on the northwest corner of the block at the Hollywood and Vine intersection and the Red Line station is located at the northeast corner.

The project is a product of Metro's Joint Development Program, which works closely with public and private partners to encourage high-quality, transit-oriented development around Metro station sites and along transit corridors. Its goal is to help reduce auto trips and relieve congestion. More than \$1 billion has been invested in such programs since 1993.

"Metro has spearheaded yet another high-profile development project on the Metro Red Line, one that will transform the Hollywood/Vine Station into a thriving transit plaza complete with nearby housing, commercial and entertainment centers," said Board Chair Gloria Molina.

Project's public benefits

Among the project's public benefits are 78 affordable rental apartments; coordination with Worksource Hollywood to implement a first-source hiring program to facilitate the employment of local residents.

A total of \$30,000 will be donated to fund community outreach programs for the Health Insurance Trust Fund; \$100,000 to fund job-training programs for the Culinary Institute and \$50,000 for Health Care Careers, and a \$500,000 endowment to the Hollywood High School for Performing Arts.

In addition, the developers have signed a neutrality agreement with the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union, Local 11.

"This project delivers a fabulous return on CRA/LA's investment," said Cecilia V. Estolano, CRA/LA Chief Executive Officer. "We put in \$6 million and the City will get \$167 million in tax revenue and \$92 million in tax increment, all by 2036. A full \$25 million will be set aside for affordable housing."

"Like Hollywood & Highland accomplished on the west end, this project has served as the catalyst for redevelopment for the eastern gateway of Hollywood," said Hollywood Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Leron Gubler.

Presale of the W Residences began several months ago with more than a thousand buyers interested in 143 residences," said Jeff Cohen, senior vice president of Gatehouse Capital.


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Funeral Services Set for CCTV Observer Doris Williams

(Feb. 13, 2007) Funeral services are planned, Thursday, for Doris Williams, a CCTV observer at the Rail Operations Center, who died at home Feb. 7. She was recuperating from two heart attacks at the time of her death.

A visitation will be held from 2 to 7 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 14, at Forest Lawn Cemetery, 4471 Lincoln Ave., in Cypress, located east of the Carson Street exit from the I-605 freeway.

A funeral service is scheduled at 11 a.m., Thursday, Feb. 15, at the Church of Our Fathers Chapel at the cemetery.

Williams, 67, joined Metro Feb. 10, 1997 as a custodian and was assigned to the Rail Operations Center. In August, 2000 she changed jobs and became a CCTV observer.

"She was very funny, very pleasant to talk to," said a fellow CCTV observer, Lucy McIntyre. "She was very helpful; whatever you needed she was there to help and give advice. She is missed."

A native of Oklahoma, Williams is survived by her husband, Arthell, and two sons, as well as by many relatives in her home state.



Doris Williams





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Mark Clifford's spectacular photograph captured Metro's first Valentine's Day message on Feb. 14, 2005. Metro Headquarters will light up the downtown skyline again on Wednesday night.



Photography by Mark Clifford

Employees will turn on the Heart Light on Valentine's Day.

- Metro's third annual Heart Light aids Heart Association of America annual campaign - Three more downtown buildings will display message to promote healthy hearts.

By GAYLE ANDERSON
(Feb. 13, 2007) Metro Headquarters will cast a romantic glow on downtown Los Angeles Tuesday as nine-story hearts of light shine from all four sides of the Gateway Building in Metro's third annual Valentine's Day message.

This year, Metro won't be alone. The Heart Association of America has invited three more downtown buildings to turn on their heart lights to promote the annual "Go Red for Women" event that encourages women to take care of their hearts.

The Bank of America building at 333 S. Hope in Bunker Hill plans to display a heart on two sides of the skyscraper building. Metro's neighbor, the Metropolitan Water District, will ante up one side along with the Wilshire & Figueroa office tower.

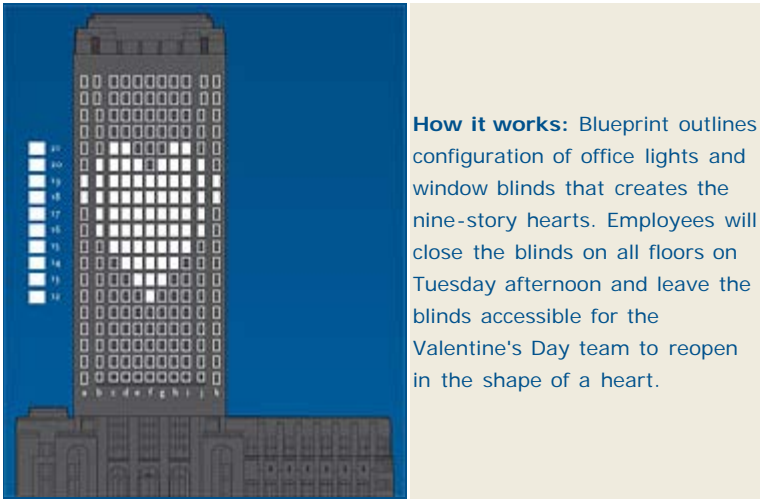
Earlier in the day, the AHA teams up with Metro on Valentine's Day for a press event at the Union Station East Portal, where Los Angeles Councilwoman Wendy Greuel and Metro's Chief Operating Officer Carolyn Flowers will encourage Los Angelenos to get "Metro Fit" through a program of exercise that involves taking transit.

The light display will become visible at sunset and end at 10 p.m. when the building's office lights automatically shut off for the night.

As the skyscraper sparkles in the downtown skyline, the Heart Lights will be visible throughout the region and cast a glow on traffic along three freeways: the I-5, I-10 and I-101.

“It’s a way to show Los Angeles we care,” says Neil Sadler of Metro’s Design Studio. Sadler and a team of designers will work with General Services to arrange heart-shaped configurations of office lights and window blinds during the evening hours of Valentine’s Day.

But it will take the whole building to do it.



“We ’re asking Metro employees who share or face a window to close the blinds by 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday afternoon,” says Sadler. “We’re also asking employees to leave the blinds accessible for the Valentine’s Day team, who will come around to each floor and open certain blinds to create the heart shape.”



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Advertisements in Metro Red Line Stations, Metro Green Line Cars Begin Next Month

By NED RACINE

(Feb. 13, 2007) Paid advertisements will begin appearing in Metro Red Line stations and on the exterior of Metro Green Line rail vehicles next month under a pilot program authorized by the Board last year.

McDonald's Corporation has purchased ads throughout the 7th & Metro Station and on Metro Green Line vehicles during March. The company will place advertising in the North Hollywood Metro Rail Station during April.

Advertisements promoting the premiere of "Shrek 3" will appear in the Universal City Station during April. Hows Markets advertisements will appear in the North Hollywood Station in June.

"Our advertising vendors are finding there is demand for advertising on our rail system, and we expect that demand to grow," said Warren Morse, DEO, Communications. Morse added that many transit systems sell ad space on their rail systems.

Morse believes these initial ads will further promote Metro Rail advertising space to potential customers, leading to increasing ad placement and revenue to Metro.



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Touring the first of the 2550 production cars were, from left, Metro's Bruce Feerer, Ed Velasquez, Lonnie Mitchell and Gerald Francis; AnsaldoBreda President Giancarlo Fantappie; Metro CEO Roger Snoble and Dave Kubicek; AnsaldoBreda CEO Roberto Assereto; Metro's Larry Kelsey and Suresh Shrivastava. Photo by Wilbur Babb.



Fitted out in its new design scheme, the first of the 2550 production cars is being tested on

the Metro Gold Line. Design Studio Photo by Jeremy Eichenbaum.

Metro Officials Welcome AnsaldoBreda 2550 Rail Production Car

(Feb. 14, 2007) Metro officials welcomed the first “production car” of the 2550 light-rail fleet during a meeting, Monday, with top executives of AnsaldoBreda, the Italian manufacturing company.

Photo by Wilbur Babb



CEO Roger Snoble at the controls.

The new cars, which will be introduced into service later this year, is vital to Metro’s rail system as the replacement “standard” car for some of aging cars of the existing fleet, officials noted. The adaptable 2550 can be used on all light-rail lines.

Metro has ordered 50 of the 90-foot-long vehicles, each weighing a trim 54 tons. The 2550 contract includes two 50-car options for the procurement of additional rail cars. The last of the 50 cars from the current

order will reach Rail Operations in 2008.

Metro has been testing a 2550 prototype vehicle since it was flown to Los Angeles in June 2005.


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Board Committee Meetings:

Thursday, Feb. 15:

Executive Management and Audit Committee, 9 a.m.
Construction Committee, 10:30 a.m.
Operations Committee, 12 p.m.

Thursday, Feb. 22: February Board Meeting, 9:30 a.m.

Metro Rapid Express Pilot Programs Among Items on Committee Agendas

In this report:

[Item 7. Congestion Mitigation Fee Study \(amended\)](#)
[Item 11. Vermont/Santa Monica Development \(approved\)](#)
[Item 29. Pavement Engineering Services](#)
[Item 33. Metro Rapid Express](#)
[Item 34. Design/Build Capital Projects](#)
[Item 37. Rail Window Vandalism](#)

(Feb. 14, 2007) Approval of three Metro Rapid Express pilot programs and a new method of small Capital Program contracts are among topics before Board committees in February.

Item 29, Pavement Engineering Services. The Construction Committee will consider authorizing the CEO to extend a contract for pavement engineering services, in order to continue testing Metro Orange Line pavement construction.

LaBelle-Marvin Incorporated (LMI) has investigated the causes of pavement cracking on the Orange Line. If the Construction Committee authorizes the CEO to modify the contract, an amount not-to-exceed \$130,000 will be added to LMI's contract, raising the total contract value from \$150,400 to \$280,400.

Item 33, Metro Rapid Express. The Operations Committee will consider authorizing three additional Metro Rapid Express routes, following earlier Board approval of a Wilshire Metro Rapid Express.

Directed by a Metro Board motion in November 2006, the staff recommends implementing up to three additional Metro Rapid Express corridors: the Hawthorne Metro Rapid, the Van Nuys Metro Rapid and the Crenshaw Metro Rapid. The staff recommends that the Metro Rapid Hawthorne and Wilshire routes would be implemented first in June 2007 as a pilot program.

The staff estimates the Wilshire Metro Rapid Express limited-stop service will produce a 10 percent to 15 percent savings in travel time over the existing Wilshire Metro Rapid service. If the pilot program is successful,

the Crenshaw and Van Nuys Rapid Express service could be implemented as soon as December 2007.

Item 34, Design/Build Capital Projects. The Operations Committee will consider authorizing the CEO to solicit and award design/build contracts for renovation, repair and construction at Metro facilities.

Used on the Metro Orange Line, Expo Line and the Division 9 Transportation Building, design/build is a method of project delivery in which an owner contracts directly with a single entity that is responsible for both design and construction of a project.

Affected by the design/build contracts would be \$25 million in Capital Program projects previously approved by the Board. These include:

A Division 18 solar generation project, including the installation of photovoltaic panels at the division.

Yard security upgrades and closed circuit television installations at Metro bus operating facilities and passenger terminals.

Item 37, Rail Window Vandalism. The Operations Committee will consider authorizing the CEO to award a 24-month, firm fixed price requirements contract—not to exceed \$298,036—with Alvarez Graffiti Guards for rail window vandal protection sheets.

Rail window vandal protection sheets protect the appearance of 225 Metro rail vehicles. The sheets protect the 16 to 32 windows on each rail vehicle from graffiti and vandalism, avoiding permanent damage to the windows.

The rail window sheets also reduce labor costs for window replacement. The staff estimates that Metro uses approximately 13, 296 window vandal protection sheets each year.

In committee action on Wednesday:

Item 7, Congestion Mitigation Fee Study. The Planning and Programming amended a motion to approve guiding principles for the Countywide Congestion Mitigation Fee Study and delayed further action on the motion until the April committee meeting. The amendment calls for the guiding principles to be circulated as a draft document to Councils of Government, cities and the Congestion Mitigation Fee Policy Advisory Committee for review and comment.

If implemented, a mitigation fee program could generate revenue for cities to use in building local projects with regional benefit, and which would address the impact of new development. In addition, the program would help cities meet their local responsibilities under the state-mandated Congestion Management Program.

Local jurisdictions would control implementation of the program, identify transportation projects, collect and control mitigation fees and ultimately build the projects or participate in funding regional improvements.

The suggested guiding principles have been developed by the Metro staff based on outreach on the program to date.

Item 11, Vermont/Santa Monica Development. The Planning and Programming Committee voted to authorize the CEO to enter into a Joint

Development Agreement with a developer interested in leasing approximately 1.1 acres of Metro property adjoining the Vermont/Santa Monica Red Line station. The motion was forwarded to the full Board for action.

The developer, who owns adjacent property to the Red Line station, hopes to develop a mixed-use residential and retail project. The parcel, located on the southwest corner of Vermont Avenue and Santa Monica Boulevard, serves as a plaza and portal to the Metro Red Line station.

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All packed and ready to go, Mattel's three-inch metal replicas of a Metro Local bus are now on sale in the Metro Store and available from the store's on-line web site. The Matchbox buses are discounted to \$2.40 for Metro employees. Mattel's new Metro Local bus mimics its life-size counterpart in both color and design.

Metro Local in Miniature: Mattel Introducing new Matchbox Bus

By ELIZABETH LEIDER

(Feb. 14, 2007) Now Barbie, Ken and even Barney can get around Los Angeles in Metro style!

A licensing agreement between Metro and Mattel will allow children and Matchbox collectors around the world to fantasize that a Metro Local bus is picking up and dropping off their favorite toys all over Los Angeles.

The agreement, which will run through 2010, allows Mattel to make toy buses that replicate Metro Local, Metro Rapid and Metro Express buses.

The first of these pint-sized metal Metro buses to be produced, the Metro Local, is now available online and in the Metro Store. The Metro Rapid will race into stores sometime in the spring, followed closely by the miniature Metro Express this summer.

These treasures will also be available wherever Matchbox toys are sold.

Although they will cost the public \$3, Metro employees can drive away from Metro Headquarters with one of the three-inch toys for \$2.40.

"It was exciting to partner with such a venerable company as Mattel," said Danielle Boutier, director of communication services. "We all played with Mattel and Matchbox when we were children."

The toys will join the ranks of notable Mattel products, such as Barbie, Fisher-Price Toys and American Girl Dolls.

The Metro Store is closed on Tuesdays from Feb. 6 through April 3 due to Metro Family Day ticket sales events at the operating divisions.




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Services Pending for Division 10 Operator Alejandro Aldrete

- Operator died, Feb. 9, following an accident at home

(Feb. 15, 2007) Funeral services are pending for Gateway Division 10 Operator Alejandro Aldrete, who died Feb. 9 at County-USC Medical Center of complications from an accident at home.

Aldrete, 32, a classic car collector, was working on one of the vehicles in his garage, Feb. 5, when it somehow fell on him, according to Transportation Operations Supervisor Caroline Howard. He was airlifted to the hospital where he died four days later.

"He was a very nice young man," said Howard, who had known Aldrete since he was assigned to Division 10.

Aldrete, a native of Los Angeles, joined metro in July 2000 as a BDOF operator and was made a full-time operator in July 2003.



Alejandro Aldrete





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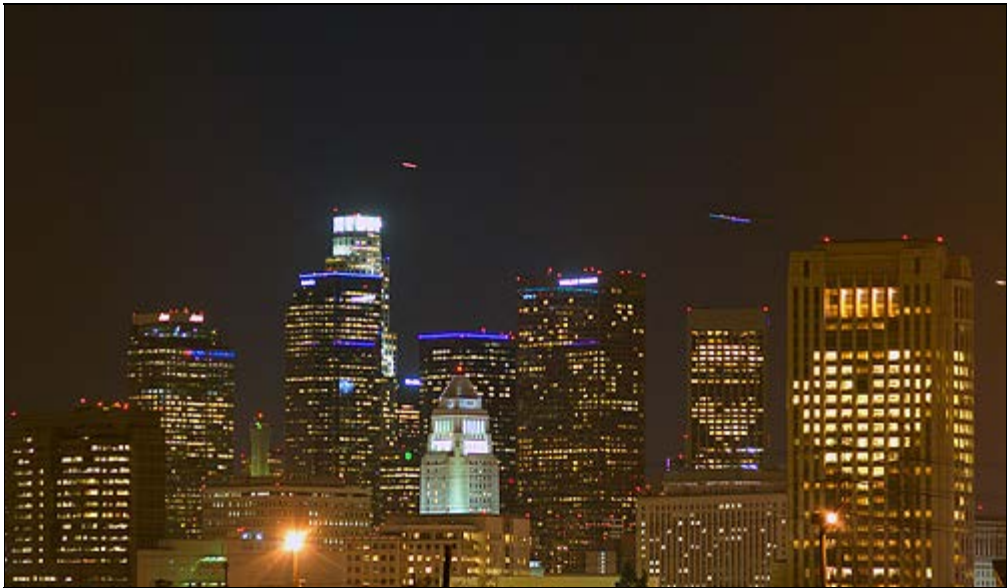
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Metro Hearts Light Up the Downtown Skyline with Love

Feb. 15, 2007 - Design Studio photographers capture the moment that left a romantic glow upon the downtown skyline throughout the year's most romantic night. Above, Peter Watkinson's downtown skyline panorama. Below, Deniz Durmus captures the heart of the city.



Above, a cityscape by Deniz Durmus, as seen from Gateway Division 10.
Below, the Metro Heart.



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Bridge Partners: Metro Bus Operator Alfonso Chavez, center, meets with Metro Board members and community college officials at Executive Management and Audit Committee meeting Feb. 15. From left, CEO Roger Snoble; Dr. Tyree Wieder, President, Los Angeles Valley College; Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Lennie Ciufo, Director of Job Training, Los Angeles Valley College; Operator Alfonso Chavez; Metro Board Member John Fasana, Metro Board Chair Gloria Molina; Patricia Mitchell, Executive Director, Literacy Network of Greater Los Angeles, and Metro Board Member Zev Yaroslavsky.



Photos by Gayle Anderson

Metro Bus Operator Demonstrates Success of Bridge Program

- Graduates of Transit English classes at community colleges have filled 176 bus operator positions in Metro's quest to fill more than 300 vacancies.

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Feb. 15, 2006) Alfonso Chavez stepped up to the podium to address members of the Metro Board, including the Board Chair Gloria Molina and Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, at the Executive Management and Audit Committee meeting Feb. 15.

Dressed in the crisp navy blues of the bus operator's uniform, Chavez, a recent graduate of the agency's Bridge Program and now a full-fledged Metro Bus operator, was there on his day off from Central City Division 1 to report to the committee on his success.

"The Bridge Program is a great program that helped me a lot," he said. "They taught me how to study in groups. They helped me to identify my strengths. They helped me to identify my weaknesses.

"At the end of the program, I got rid of all my weaknesses and I have nothing but

strengths now," he jokingly remarked.

The candor and enthusiastic gratitude from Chavez drew congratulatory comments from Board Chair Gloria Molina:

"Thank you, Mr. Chavez, we're very proud of you. I hope you enjoy working for us. We're looking for more people like yourself. We have an unbelievable amount of vacancies, but if we can get more folks like you, I think we're going to do very, very well."



Alfonso Chavez, center, and other graduates of the Bridge Program are backed by a team of partners from Metro and the Los Angeles Community College District. Clockwise: Patricia Mitchell, Executive Director, Literacy Network of Greater Los Angeles; Executive Officer, Administration, Don Ott; Gateway Cities General Manager Alex Clifford; Lennie Ciufo, Director of Job Training, Los Angeles Valley College; Dr. Tyree Wieder, President, Los Angeles Valley College, and Chavez.

Metro is doing very well and substantial progress has been made, reported Don Ott, Executive Officer, Administration. Ott said the number of vacancies has been reduced from a high of 315 in August to 161 as of Feb. 11.

The ongoing Bridge Program, which was created to support Metro's effort to fill nearly 300 bus operator positions, has produced 176 new operators who have been hired or are in the process of being hired, said Ott.

The Bridge Program is a partnership between Metro and the Los Angeles Community College (LACC) district, which conducts the five-week Transit English class for likely job candidates.

The language course concentrates on teaching enough English to allow candidates to successfully complete bus operator training, to safely operate a bus in LA's challenging environment, and to communicate effectively with dispatchers, supervisors, law enforcement officers and customers.

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Metro Security Officers Training in Terrorist Threat Recognition

- 'I'm more alert and more aware,' says one trainee

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Feb. 15, 2007) In Anniston, Ala., last month, Metro Security Officer Carlos Pena climbed into a protective suit, pulled a hood over his head, strapped on respirator and stepped into a room full of deadly nerve gas.

Pena, along with classmates from Metro and a number of other "first responder" agencies around the country, were students at the Center for Domestic Preparedness where they received training in the threat posed by chemical, biological and radiological weapons.

"It was scary," Pena says of his experience in the chemical chamber. "But, it increased my abilities and awareness, and my confidence in myself and the protective equipment."

To date, more than 35 Metro security officers have attended the five-day "incident command" course at Anniston and 15 have participated in a four-day "train the trainer" course at New Mexico Tech in Socorro, N.M., that covers response to terrorist bombings.

Both courses are sponsored by the U.S. Homeland Security Department. In March, another contingent of security officers will attend a training course in Deming, N.M., in preventing and responding to suicide bombers.

Basic knowledge of WMD

"We're making sure our security officers have basic training as first responders and a basic knowledge of weapons of mass destruction," says Security Lt. Jacob Lopez, who coordinates the training program. "If our system comes under attack, the officers who likely will be the first responders will know how to set up an incident command post and will know how to recognize, avoid and isolate a threat and notify the proper authorities."

Security Sgt. Ty Henderson has attended both courses and is a Homeland Security-certified instructor. Participants in the classes he



Metro Security Officer Leroy Reed, above, and Senior Officer Harold Wilson, below, are recent graduates of the security programs. Reed completed a course at the Homeland Security Department's Center for Domestic Preparedness and Reed attended the Incident Command Course at New Mexico Tech. Photos by Ned Racine



attended included city managers, public works managers, fire fighters, police officers and others.

“We don’t deal with terrorist acts on a daily basis as they might in Israel,” Henderson says, “but we need to be ready in case one occurs. We also want to bring back current information from a trusted source like Homeland Security.”

Now, when he’s out on patrol, Officer Pena draws on the training he received during the WMD course. “I’m more alert and more aware of what could happen and how to provide assistance to the public. I’m sure that, with the right equipment, if I had to help the fire department or another first-responder agency, I could do that now.”


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You Can Help Metro Make the Time Change In order to help Metro make the shift to Daylight Saving Time, shut down your computer when you leave work today. If you work a shift on Saturday, Feb. 17, shut down your computer at the end of your shift. Daylight Saving Time will affect 128 to 145 Metro computer applications, including FIS, HASTAS, TOPS and Transit Safe.

Daylight Saving Time Springs Early This Year

- Time synchronization on all Metro computers will be affected
- Shift could affect up to 145 Metro computer applications

By NED RACINE

(Feb. 16, 2007) Metro employees will be springing forward a little earlier this year and Information Technology Services (ITS) will be working to ensure the agency's computers will spring with them.

The old trick of remembering how to reset clocks for Daylight Saving Time—*Spring forward and Fall back*—will be needed earlier this year because of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, changing the beginning and end dates of Daylight Saving Time for the first time since 1987.

Sunday, March 11, marks the beginning of Daylight Saving Time this year, in contrast with April 2 last year. The end date will be Sunday, Nov. 4, compared with Oct. 29 last year. The new dates will extend Daylight Saving Time by one month compared with 2006.

For Metro, the new Daylight Saving Time schedule means the time synchronization on all computers will be affected. Also affected, according to Steven Timberman, director of Information Management, are 128 to 145 computer applications such as, FIS, HASTAS, TOPS and Transit Safe.

ITS already has begun the process so that "March 11 would be a non-event," said Chief Information Officer Elizabeth Bennett. ITS will apply the second series of system updates on Saturday.

For the system changes to take effect, computer users will need to shut down their machines when they leave work, today, or at the end of their Saturday, Feb. 17, shift.

Ol' Ben thought of it first

Benjamin Franklin first suggested the idea of Daylight Saving Time in an essay published in Paris in 1784.

Since 1966, most of the United States has observed Daylight Saving Time from 2 a.m. on the first Sunday of April to 2 a.m. on the last

Sunday of October.

The hour of 2 a.m. was originally selected as the changeover time because most people would be at home, the fewest trains were running then and the continental United States would make the changeover by daylight.

American Samoa, Arizona (except the Navajo Indian Reservation), Guam, Hawaii, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands do not observe Daylight Saving Time.

On its website (www.energy.ca.gov), the California Energy Commission cites U.S. Department of Transportation studies from the 1970s that showed United States electricity usage was reduced 1 percent for each day of Daylight Saving Time.

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Funeral Services Scheduled for Operator Alejandro Aldrete

(Feb. 16, 2007) Funeral services are scheduled Monday and Tuesday for Gateway Division 10 Operator Alejandro Aldrete, who died Feb. 9 following an accident at his home.

A rosary will be held beginning at 7 p.m., Monday, Feb. 19, at Our Lady of the Rosary of Talpa Catholic Church, 2914 South 4th St., in Los Angeles (323-268-9176).

A funeral mass is set for 9 a.m., Tuesday, Feb. 20, at the church. Interment at Resurrection Cemetery, 966 Potrero Grande Dr., in Montebello (323-887-2024) will follow the funeral service.

Aldrete, 32, a classic car collector, was working on one of the vehicles in his garage, Feb. 5, when it somehow fell on him, according to Transportation Operations Supervisor Caroline Howard. He was airlifted to the hospital where he died four days later.

"He was a very nice young man," said Howard, who had known Aldrete since he was assigned to Division 10.

Aldrete, a native of Los Angeles, joined metro in July 2000 as a BDOF operator and was made a full-time operator in July 2003.



Alejandro Aldrete



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Deputies Recover Handguns in Follow-Up of Metro Vehicle Theft

By NED RACINE

(Feb. 16, 2007) Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau detectives, following up on the theft of a Metro sedan recovered two handguns and a bounty of Los Angeles Police Department equipment, Feb. 13, that had been stolen from the automobile.

Serving a search warrant just before 8 a.m., detectives arrested Gilbert Torrez, 39, as a suspect in the theft of the Chevrolet Lumina, which was stolen from the Los Angeles International Airport bus layover area on Nov. 10.

Detectives served the search warrant at a residence in the 5700 block of West 74th Street in Los Angeles and found the suspect in a camper trailer behind a single family residence.



Sheriff's detectives recovered this evidence during a search of the residence of a suspect in the theft of a Metro vehicle. Photo courtesy of Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau

According to Sheriff's Sgt. Augie Pando, when detectives discovered Torrez he was armed with a loaded .9-millimeter pistol on his right hip. Detectives reported Torrez also carried a loaded .45-caliber pistol in his left front pants pocket.

Detectives identified the .45-caliber pistol as the handgun stolen during the theft of the Metro sedan being used by a Los Angeles International Airport police officer. The Metro vehicle was recovered in November.

Pando reported that multiple pieces of evidence recovered from the camper trailer linked the suspect to numerous vehicle and commercial burglaries. LAX detectives identified some of the items located in the camper trailer as the personal and department equipment of the LAX police officer who was driving the Metro vehicle. The investigation continues.




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CEO UpDate

Salaries, Job Equity and Promoting from Within Metro

By CEO ROGER SNOBLE



CEO Roger Snoble

This month, I want to talk about a couple of things I believe have been on the minds of many employees and another topic we all should be thinking about for the future of Metro.

In the FY 2008 budget, we're assuming a 3.5 percent pay increase for both non-contract and union employees. That's the percentage increase negotiated with our unions and that's the request we'll take to the Board. If approved, it would be effective July 1. We're having a great year, so you all deserve it.

Pay for performance. I know Metro has had a pay for performance program for non-contract employees in the past and, while it may have been popular with many employees, it also had its problems. It's very difficult to run such a program in a government agency. There are issues of fairness and justification in a politically charged environment. The large deficit Metro is facing makes it even more difficult.

I don't foresee a return any time soon to a pay for performance system. And yet, I realize there are inequities in the salaries of many of our non-contract employees. Working with a new Board-approved policy, we've set up a process for reviewing employee classifications and for making equity adjustments to salaries for those classifications.

We recently took to the Board a list of positions to be reclassified and we'll be reviewing 10 to 15 percent of non-contract positions every year – concentrating on those that are the most out of line with pay rates for similar positions at other employers in this region.

Objective recommendations

Each year, Human Resources will ask the executive officers to look at their departments to see where they may be having problems keeping or hiring good employees. HR will work with the Hay Group, a consulting firm that will look at the responsibilities and span of control of the jobs they

review, and give us objective recommendations for the right grade and salary level for those jobs.

Don't expect to see wholesale changes from this process. On the whole, HR says we generally are competitive in pay, although there may be certain skills that are in short supply in the area and that require higher pay to keep those employees or attract candidates with those skills.

Finally, succession planning. For the future of this agency, we'll begin developing a program this year to ensure that employees have opportunities to improve their skills and advance through the ranks at Metro. The result of the program will also ensure that Metro will have qualified people ready to step up to the next level when a manager or executive retires or leaves the agency.

I believe in promoting from within when at all possible. I'd rather groom a person inside the agency than go outside the agency to hire. We've had to go outside a lot lately, and that's disappointing to me.

Metro is a project-oriented agency and we'll focus on project management first. People with those skills are hard to find, and we're looking at how we can develop the good people we have into top-notch project managers by providing basic and advanced training programs.

Project management may be the first target area, but from a practical standpoint, I need people with talent in all areas of the agency. When we recruit someone at a lower level, I always feel that this could be the person who could end up being CEO someday. Maybe that someone is you.

February 16, 2007

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Metro Author's New Book Highlights LA's Red Car Trolleys

- 'Readers will be surprised' by system's reach, Jim Walker says
- Book signing Thursday afternoon in the Metro Store

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Feb. 20, 2007) On pages 28 and 29 of a new book by Metro's Jim Walker is a map of the Pacific Electric Red Car lines as they were in the early 1920s. The reach and breadth of the system is astonishing.

From Redlands on the east to Santa Monica on the west, and from Mt. Lowe on the north to San Pedro on the south, a spidery octopus of rail lines – 1,164 miles of track – is sketched with the communities they served presented like tendrils along the system's branches.

"Readers will be surprised how far it went and how many lines there were," says Walker, an archivist in the Metro's Dorothy Payton Gray Transportation Library, and author of "Images of Rail – Pacific Electric Red Cars."

Walker will be available for a book signing from 1:30 to 3 p.m., Thursday, when his book goes on sale in the Metro Store on the Plaza level of the Gateway

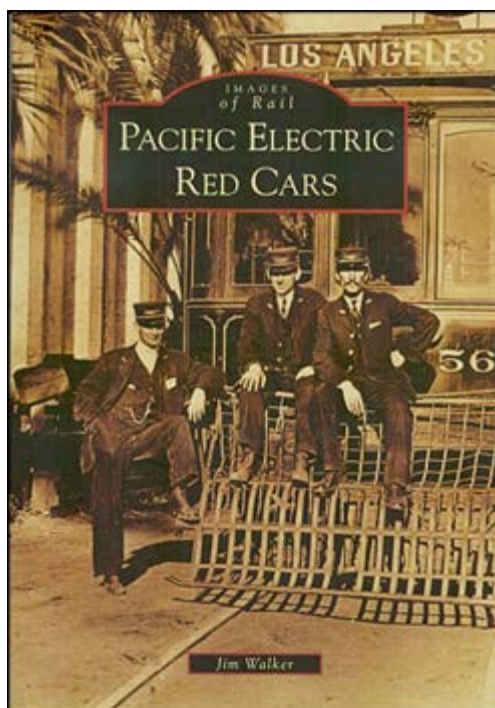
Building. The book, which will sell at a discounted \$17 to employees, also will be available on the store's web pages at [www.metro.net](#). Walker has designated the book's 8 percent royalties to the agency.

The soft-cover, 128-page book begins the tale of railways in Los Angeles in 1874 when the first horse cars roamed the streets, to be followed by cable cars, which eventually were replaced by electric streetcars.

Highlights Huntington's role

Published by Arcadia Publishing, the book highlights the role of Henry E. Huntington, a land developer who established some of the first rail lines to serve the suburban communities he built.

Packed with 205 photos, maps and illustrations, the book's nine chapters



Jim Walker's new book is a retrospective of Los Angeles.

take the reader from the founding of Pacific Electric through the early 1900s, the Depression, World War II and into the company's last years of 1961-65. Most of the photos are from the Metro library's collection, while others are from collections held by Walker and other railway fans.

The goal of Walker's book? "I'm trying to answer a lot of questions for people who don't know about the history of rail in Los Angeles or about Metro's predecessor agencies. They have no idea what was here once."

A native of Lynwood, the 71-year-old Walker grew up riding the Red Cars, often journeying into downtown LA on the trolleys. The romance of the railways remained with him into adulthood when, in 1956, he helped found what is now the Orange Empire Railway Museum in Perris, Calif.

Edited 40-plus books

As the one-time owner of Interurban Publications, Walker edited more than 40 books about trains and trolleys. In 1977, he wrote "The Yellow Cars of Los Angeles" about the city's other major trolley system, the Los Angeles Railway. He's currently working with Arcadia Publishing on another book about the Yellow Cars.

Recognized as an authority on rail in Los Angeles, Walker believes World War II kept the rail lines in service longer than they might otherwise have lasted. Gas and rubber rationing and the shift of wartime production from automobiles to military vehicles forced people to continue to use transit.

Walker doesn't subscribe to the "theory" that the automobile manufacturers and oil companies forced LA's rail lines out of business. It was the system's obsolescence, the public's post-war infatuation with the automobile and a lack of the taxpayer subsidies that sustain public transit systems today, he says.

"The rail companies couldn't make money off of them anymore and they wanted out from under," he says, adding, "It wasn't just the rail lines that were suffering, it was all public transportation."


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More Transportation Funding Needed for LA County, Officials Say

- Local officials react strongly to CTC staff-recommended cuts in funds for local highway projects
- LA County would receive less than 20 percent of funds requested

(Feb. 20, 2007) Reacting to news out of Sacramento, last week, that the region might receive only a fraction of requested transportation funding, Los Angeles County, LA City and Metro officials joined the county's legislative delegation in Sacramento, Tuesday, to ask the California Transportation Commission (CTC) to allocate more funding for the region.

Metro Board Chair and County Supervisor Gloria Molina, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and other Metro Board members, along with City Council President Eric Garcetti and other council members, CEO Roger Snoble, State Sen. Alan Lowenthal and Assemblymen Mike Feuer and Robert Huff were among those who were in the capitol to testify before the CTC about increasing funding over the sums recommended by the CTC staff.

Last week, the CTC staff released a list of recommended projects for approval at the commission's Feb. 28 meeting.

The recommendation includes \$2.78 billion from the \$4.5 Corridor Mobility Improvement Account for projects on the state highway system. Under the staff recommendation, Los Angeles County stands to receive less than 12 percent of the \$2.78 billion, while it has more than one third of the state's congestion (number of daily vehicle hours of delay).

Less than 55 percent

The program is focused on congestion relief on the state highway system and is subject to the north/south split, under which 60 percent of the statewide \$2.78 billion program – \$1.67 billion – must be programmed in 13 Southern California counties, including Los Angeles County. The CTC staff recommendation is only \$1.52 billion, or less than 55 percent for the south counties.

Metro submitted requests for \$1.77 billion in transportation project funding for Los Angeles County, but the CTC staff recommended providing only \$327 million – less than 20 percent of the requested amount.

Even after the required north-south split is applied, Los Angeles County stands to receive less than one-fifth of the south county amount, while it has almost half of the congestion.

In a statement last week, Molina called the CTC staff recommendations "an insult to the people of LA County. Twenty eight percent of the

California's residents live in LA County and we are burdened with one third of the state's congestion. Yet under the CTC's proposal, we will receive less than 12 percent of the funding currently available. This is unacceptable. We firmly believe that every single project Metro submitted met CTC requirements – and, clearly, every one of these projects warrants funding."

On Monday, Villaraigosa took to the streets of downtown Los Angeles to stress the need for additional transportation funding for the region. Stepping into traffic, he handed startled motorists flyers headlined "CALLING ALL LOS ANGELES COMMUTERS" and urging action on traffic funding.

Denied \$730 million request

The CTC staff recommended denying Metro's request for \$730 million in funds for the I-405 northbound carpool lane, a design-build project.

The staff's recommendation apparently is based on an erroneous assumption that construction won't start until December 2011.

In a note to the Board on Friday, Snoble said Caltrans District 7 Director Doug Failing, an ex-officio member of the Metro Board, "will clarify to the CTC staff that the design-build process will result in a much earlier construction start date (on the I-405 carpool lane) than the one inferred by CTC staff."

The Corridor Mobility Program was the first category of the infrastructure bonds authorized by California's voters on the November 7, 2006 ballot as part of Proposition 1B.

The following projects in Los Angeles County have been recommended for funding by the CTC staff:

- \$157.6 million for Interstate 5 Carpool and Mixed Flow Lanes from Interstate 605 to Orange County Line
- \$73 million for Interstate 5 Carpool Lane from Route 170 to Route 134 in Burbank
- \$97.3 million for Interstate 10 Extend El Monte Busway/Carpool Lane from Puente to Citrus.


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U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary Peters to Speak at Metro

- Remarks will kick off two-day transportation commission hearing

(Feb. 20, 2007) U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary E. Peters will deliver opening remarks in the Metro Headquarters Board Room, Wednesday afternoon, at the start of a two-day "field hearing" of the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission.



U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary E. Peters

On Wednesday morning, Peters will take a helicopter and surface tour that will include LA freeways, the Alameda Corridor, the Port of Los Angeles, the proposed Burlington Northern Santa Fe harbor freight facility and the Union Pacific rail line to Ontario.

Created by Congress "to preserve and enhance the surface transportation system" for the 21st century, the commission is a 12-member group that represents federal, state and local governments, metropolitan planning organizations, transportation-related industries and public interest organizations.

The commission's field hearing will be divided into four panels for discussions on trade and commerce; mobility, congestion and safety; and partnership and collaboration.

Board Chair Gloria Molina will speak at the beginning of the second hearing day, which will be focused on national policy and efficiency. CEO Roger Snoble will speak during a panel on transitioning to the next generation transportation system.

Other speakers during the field hearing will State Sen. Alan Lowenthal; Will Kempton, director, Caltrans; Art Leahy, CEO, OCTA; John Barna, executive director, California Transportation Commission; and Sunne Wright-McPeak, CEO, California Emerging Technology Fund.





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Ready for Prime Time: The Metro Choir sang the National Anthem before the Avengers game at the Staples Center last May.



Photo by Jill Weisleder courtesy of the LA Avengers.

Metro Choir to Present a Rousing Finale to Black History Month Celebrations at Metro

(Feb. 21, 2007) Black History Month concludes with a noontime performance of the Metro Choir, Feb. 28, on the Plaza level of the Gateway Building. Featuring the Rev. Eric P. Lee, executive director, Southern Christian Leadership Conference of Greater Los Angeles, the event will include drummers, guest soloists and a military tribute.

The month-long celebration began with a multimedia presentation by Damien Schnyder on the critiques of American society found in hip-hop music. Schnyder is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Texas at Austin.

Wanda Moore with AAEA leaders George Parks and Susan Dove.	Wanda Moore gives a retrospective of former Mayor Tom Bradley.	Author Moore autographs copies of her book, "Never, Never Give Up!"

Next up was speaker Wanda Moore, who presented “The Untold Legacy of Mayor Tom Bradley,” a lecture and slide show illustrating the administration of Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley. Moore served as executive assistant to the five-term mayor.

Moore’s entertaining slide show, punctuated with her lively comments and energetic style, chronicled her years with Mayor Bradley. When the world’s glitteratti came calling. Moore answered the door. Astonishingly, the photographs captured memorable moments with the likes of Billy Dee Williams, Ella Fitzgerald, Bishop Desmond Tutu, Telly Savalas, Prince Charles, Charlton Heston, Muhammed Ali, Arthur Ashe, Sarah Vaughn, Count Basie, Johnnie Cochran, and a host of notables. Moore was on the scene and at the side of Ray Charles when the legendary singer getting a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

		
A soul food buffet of endless delights.	One of the slides shows elephants on the range. "I can never go to a zoo again," says Lane-Goodson.	Pat Lane-Goodson, center, takes the audience on an armchair safari with tour guide Julien Dothard, right.

The following Thursday, celebrants enjoyed a catered a soul-food buffet luncheon that preceded an armchair safari to Kenya and Tanzania presented by Pat Lane-Goodson, senior contract administrator, and tour guide Julien Dothard. The “Journey to Africa” slide show, narrated by Lane-Goodson, took us on the safari of a lifetime to see the Maasai Mara, Lake Nakuru, Amboseli, Ngorongoro Crater, and so much more.

While on safari, Lane-Goodson was moved by how animals and people live side-by-side in peace. “I can never go to a zoo again,” she said. “After seeing those beautiful animals roaming free, I don’t want to see them in a cramped space behind bars.”

Metro’s African American Employees Association sponsors Black History Month programs.


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LA Officials Make Progress in Quest for State Transportation Funds

- I-405 HOV lane and I-5 widening top funding requests

(Feb. 21, 2007) Reports out of Sacramento indicate that Los Angeles officials made significant progress, Tuesday, in their quest to persuade members of the California Transportation Commission (CTC) to increase funding for highway projects in the Southland.

At issue is the CTC staff's recommendation to deny Metro's request for a total of \$1.77 billion in funding for LA County transportation projects. The staff recommended allocating only \$327 million to the county – less than 20 percent of Metro's request.

Topping LA's concerns is the \$730 million requested to construct a carpool lane on the northbound I-405 and the \$387 million needed to widen the I-5 north of the Orange County line.

An LA delegation that included Board Chair Gloria Molina, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Congressman Brad Sherman (D-27), CEO Roger Snoble, LA city council members, the area's legislators and others held private meetings with CTC commissioners and testified at a commission hearing.

Gov. Schwarzenegger also sent a letter to the CTC chair, Tuesday, in which he "strongly" urged the commission to reconsider the "essential" projects on the list for funding, including the I-405 HOV lane.

"Our promise to the voters in seeking their support for this bond package is that their investment will relieve traffic congestion in key transportation arteries around the state," Schwarzenegger wrote.

In her testimony, Molina asked the commissioners to "commit to fairness today" and allot to LA County some \$1.3 billion "that would represent a fair allocation." She said failure to build the I-405 HOV lane "risks leaving the \$130 million federal dollars on the table, lost to LA County and this state."

Molina also called for full funding for the widening of I-5 from the Orange County line to the I-605 to "end that bottleneck that traps countless commuters in daily gridlock." Metro had requested \$387 million, but the CTC staff has recommended allocating only \$156 million. [Click here to read statement in full.](#)

Metro also is seeking funding for the I-5 carpool lane from Rt. 170 to Rt. 134 in Burbank, and for extending the El Monte Busway and carpool lane on I-10 from Puente to Citrus.

"I'm optimistic," Snoble said today. "It was a full-court press in Sacramento, yesterday, and it galvanized our elected officials. We're

going to be working with the CTC staff and Caltrans to correct the errors that were made initially and give the commissioners a more balanced funding program when they come back on Feb. 28 to actually vote on the funding allocations.”

Afterward, media reports quoted several commissioners as supporting the request to boost funding for the region’s transportation projects. And, at a news conference Tuesday, Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez said the Assembly would not appropriate funding that did not meet the state’s transportation needs.

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CEO Roger Snoble hosted U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary Peters during her visit to Metro Headquarters, which included boarding an articulated bus.



Photos by Ned Racine

Transportation Secretary's LA Tour Ends with Metro Articulated Bus

See myMetro.net report: [U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary Peters to Speak at Metro](#)

(Feb. 21, 2007) Just off a whirlwind helicopter tour of LA's freeways, port and rail system, U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary Peters had just enough time, Wednesday, to inspect a Metro articulated bus before delivering opening remarks at a transportation hearing at the Gateway Building.

Greeted by CEO Roger Snoble at Union Station, Peters seemed to be impressed by the long, red coach. She posed for photos and walked the interior from end to end before taking a peek at the engine.

"I've seen almost every mode of transportation (today), but I've also seen how the local officials have come together, not only on the Alameda Corridor project, but on the issues of moving passengers as well, like Metro's new articulated bus," Peters said as she entered Metro Headquarters.

"I saw a lot of spirit of cooperation, a lot of focus on what they can do to improve transportation here and make the lives of the people of Los Angeles



U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary Peters' stop at Metro included a look at an articulated bus engine. CEO Roger Snoble brief the secretary.

better," she added, "but, also to help industry and business grow here."

Accompanying Peters on her tour were U.S. Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-38), members of the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission and representatives of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Union Pacific railroads. --*From Bill Heard, Editor*

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West Valley Division 8 Mechanic Marilyn Archie inspects the undercarriage of a Neoplan 4500 as part of a 6,000-mile inspection.



Metro's Marilyn Archie Repairs Buses and Promotes Metro in the Community

- Convincing people she's a mechanic is hard; appearing at schools is a pleasure

By NED RACINE

(Feb. 22, 2007) As a Division Ambassador Council (DAC) member since 1995, Metro's Marilyn Archie volunteers to communicate transit information and safety messages to the public. She especially enjoys attending school career days and describing her job, even when her finger nails get in the way.

Archie, 35, a Mechanic C for West Valley Division 8 meets considerable disbelief when people learn she's a mechanic. The former model and singer has no trouble drawing people to her. The skepticism appears—particularly among males—when they discover her occupation.

"They find out I'm a mechanic. And they say, 'You're what?' "

According to Archie, disbelieving males insist on seeing her hands and nails. "And I have French [manicured] nails now, so they say, 'No, you're not. You don't do that work. Your nails are too perfect.' "

Archie remembers one unconvinced man questioning her about the kind of

bus engines she works on. Even after her reply, the man asked her other bus questions. Archie named transmissions and brake systems before she could convince her skeptical questioner.

On a recent Thursday morning, because the inspection team was two mechanics short, Archie was performing a 6,000-mile inspection on bus 4574, a Neoplan 4500. She does not enjoy inspections as much as repair, but she takes the task seriously. "You definitely have to take your time because lives are in your hands when you send that bus out."

Quite a change

Checking the condition of CNG tanks is quite a change from Archie's first 15 years at Metro when she was a service attendant from 1990 until 2005.

*Photos by Ned Racine



Archie notes the status of items on her inspection list.

Eager to work at something else, Archie completed an auto mechanics class at Los Angeles Trade Tech in 1998. After pausing to have her son Tony, Archie resumed classes at Santa Monica City College in 2002, this time studying bus mechanics and finding she enjoyed it better than auto mechanics.

Archie, whose mother retired from Metro in 2000, after 23 years' service, believes her exposure to buses as a service attendant was

one reason she preferred bus mechanics over automobile mechanics. She also liked the larger bus parts.

"I wanted to do something that was a challenge for me," Archie said. "When I did the Santa Monica College class it was good to have the theory, but I still didn't have the hands on [knowledge]. So when this class for Metro became available, it was a great opportunity for me to jump on it and not only learn the theory but get all the practical work. I had no idea what to do with any of the tools."

Metro's mechanic's class, co-sponsored by Metro and the ATU, convinced Archie she could do the job, and it made her transition easier in another way. "A lot of the guys never worked on any car, any truck, anything. So you don't feel so left out when you realize half the class doesn't know what you don't know."

Hands-on training

Archie ended her six months of hands-on training in April 2006 and began her mechanic's career servicing the NABI articulated buses. Now she is learning to service the 4500s, such as the coach she is working on this day. She finds them a little easier to work on because the mechanical areas contain a little more space.

Especially helpful in her becoming a mechanic was Brian Markey, equipment maintenance instructor, and her instructor at Santa Monica City College. Also supportive were Michael Harnish, assistant maintenance manager, and Bruce Ramsey, equipment maintenance supervisor, both of West Hollywood Division 7.

Now troubleshooting a problem, fixing it, and sending the bus rolling on the street constitutes a good day for Archie.

"Even when I'm done—tidying everything up—I want to make it look as professional as possible, like I put the system in," Archie explained. "I want to make all the lines perfect, because that represents me."

Although Archie's long-term goals are to become a maintenance supervisor or a chairman on her ATU union board, she enjoys the variety of her job now. "It seems that every time you get a bus—even though it's the same part I may have done last week—it may be a different problem. So it feels different."



Archie checks the wiring on coach 4574's engine.

Represents Metro mechanics

Recently Archie's DAC member duties have taken her to events throughout Los Angeles County, particularly career days at junior high schools and elementary schools. She finds value in simply representing a Metro mechanic: "Letting little girls and boys know that the job exists, because a lot of kids just think: 'bus driver.' "

Archie thanks Patrick Orr, her maintenance manager, for allowing her to perform DAC duties during the school day.

And she encourages Metro employees to become DAC volunteers, in part to show the public how many professions Metro includes, although she cautions "You have to be ready to give your time and come with an open mind. You have to want to be a helping person."

Anyone interested in becoming a DAC member may call Archie at 818-701-3830.

Archie definitely believes more female Metro employees should consider being mechanics. "I think it would boost a lot of women's self-esteem, just to know that they can do what a man can do," she said. "They may not have the same strength of a man, but they might be able to think better than the next guy doing the same job."

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Transportation experts, from left, Dr. Martin Wachs of RAND's transportation, space and technology; Sunne Wright-McPeak, CEO of the California Emerging Technology Fund; CEO Roger Snoble and Jim Waltze, president of the Griffith Company. Photo by Ned Racine.



CEO Snoble, Other Transportation Experts Speak at National Commission 'Field Hearing'

(Feb. 22, 2007) CEO Roger Snoble joined other transportation experts, Thursday, in a panel discussion in the Metro Board Room on the future of transportation systems. The group spoke during a "field hearing" of the National Surface Transportation Policy & Revenue Study Commission.

Also on the panel were Dr. Martin Wachs of RAND's transportation, space and technology; Sunne Wright-McPeak, CEO of the California Emerging Technology Fund; and Jim Waltze, president of the Griffith Company.

The commission's two-day field hearing included three other panel discussions on trade and commerce; mobility, congestion and safety, and partnership and collaboration.

Board Chair Gloria Molina was among those who spoke Thursday morning at the start of a day focusing on national transportation policy and efficiency.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary Peters was the keynote speaker, Wednesday, at the opening of the field hearing.

Created by Congress "to preserve and enhance the surface transportation system" for the 21st century, the commission is a 12-member group that represents federal, state and local governments, metropolitan planning organizations, transportation-related industries and public interest organizations.



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Digitally composed photo illustrates TransitTV broadcast of local television news, here featuring KVEA Anchor Ruben Luengas. Photo courtesy of KBNC.



Metro's Transit TV to Carry Local News in English, Spanish

(Feb. 22, 2007) NBC's Los Angeles TV stations – KNBC-Ch. 4, KVEA-Ch. 52 and KWHY-Ch. 22 – are partnering with Transit TV to provide additional on-board programming to Los Metro Bus riders.

The programming change began Wednesday, when bus riders could watch five minutes of local news, weather and sports programming every hour as they commuted to and from work. On-camera anchors for the three stations deliver the news in English and Spanish.

Transit TV's wireless network of 4,400 LCD screens on Metro's 2,200 buses will enable the programming to be updated throughout the day; ensuring riders receive the latest news, weather and sports.

Installed on buses since August 2006, Transit TV screens provide riders with 48 minutes of programming every hour. Programming also includes Metro advertising and information spots, as well as a map showing the real-time movement of the bus.

"The addition of local news content furthers our commitment to provide our viewers with up-to-date, high quality, relevant programming," said Gerry Noble, CEO and President of Transit TV.

KNBC-TV, Ch. 4, is NBC Universal's flagship, owned-and-operated station in the Los Angeles market. KVEA-TV, Ch. 52, is the Telemundo Network's flagship station in the Los Angeles market. KWHY-TV, Ch. 22, is an independent Spanish-language TV station providing local news and entertaining programming to the Hispanic community in the Los Angeles area.





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Services Pending for Rita Vance, 18-Year Metro Employee

By NED RACINE

(Feb. 23) Services are pending for Rita Vance, a general clerk in the Procurement and Material Management Department, who died early Thursday morning, Feb. 22.

Vance had turned 40 on February 11. The cause of death has not been determined.

A Metro employee since 1989, Vance is survived by her husband, Carl Vance, and their son Carl Vance Jr.



Rita Vance




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CTC Staff Proposes \$1.17 Billion for LA County Freeways

- Recommendation up from \$327 million, but Metro will seek a 'fair share' of the funding

(Feb. 27, 2007) Los Angeles County would receive \$1.17 billion for freeway improvements under revised staff recommendations released Monday by the California Transportation Commission (CTC).

Metro officials expressed appreciation for the boost in the funding recommendation from the original \$327 million, but said they would continue to seek additional dollars.

If approved by the CTC, the recommended funding would provide:

- \$730 million for the I-405 Northbound Carpool lane, and
- \$387 million for the I-5 Carpool and general lanes between the I-605 Freeway and the Orange County line.

Instead of meeting less than 20 percent of Metro's funding request, the revised recommendations would provide LA County with approximately 43.3 percent of the \$2.7 billion share of the Corridor Mobility Improvement Account (CMIA) bond proceeds earmarked for counties in Southern California.

However, the revised recommended list does not include CMIA funding for the following projects:

- \$97.3 million for the I-10 Carpool Lane/EI Monte Busway extension project from Puente Ave. to Citrus St. (\$97.3 mil), and
- \$73 million for the I-5 Carpool Lanes from Route 134 to Route 170.

'Unbearable traffic congestion'

"Just as commuters on the 405 and 5 Freeways endure significant traffic congestion each day, the 10 Freeway creates unbearable traffic congestion and pollution for many of the very voters who voted for Proposition 1B," said Board Chair and County Supervisor Gloria Molina in a statement released Monday. "They, too, are entitled to a share of this funding."

In a statement also released Monday, CEO Roger Snoble said, "While we are appreciative of the CTC staff's revised recommendations...we are disappointed that other important transportation initiatives failed to be recognized."

"The revised recommendations are a step in the right direction and we remain hopeful that other important congestion mitigation projects along the I-10 and I-5 freeways will get the attention they need to become reality," he continued. "We plan to make our case before the commissioners of the CTC at their meeting on Wednesday (Feb. 28, in Irvine) in hopes of getting Los Angeles' fair share of these important transportation dollars."

In a note to Metro Board members, Snoble said the CTC's revised staff recommendations are still not proportionate to the county's population (44.2 percent) and congestion (48.7 percent) share in Southern California.

If approved by the CTC, the staff recommendation would fully program the entire \$4.5 billion CMIA program instead of \$2.8 billion as originally recommended.



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Funeral Services This Week for Metro's Rita Vance

(Feb. 27, 2007) Funeral services are scheduled later this week for Rita Vance, a general clerk in the Procurement and Material Management Department, who died Feb. 22, following a brief illness.

A viewing is scheduled from 4 until 7 p.m., Friday, March 2, at the One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism Christian Church, 700 East 70th St., in Long Beach, 562-633-2515. The funeral service will be held at 11 a.m., Saturday, March 3, at the church.

Vance had turned 40 on February 11. A Metro employee since 1989, Vance is survived by her husband, Carl Vance, and their son Carl Vance Jr.



Rita Vance





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Editor's Note: The young man arrested in the Metro bus tagging incident issued an apology, Wednesday, in a letter read over the Santee high school public address system, according to the Associated Press. School Principal Vince Carbino said the youth apologized to his parents, to Mayor Villaraigosa, to the school principal, the bus operator, and to the students and reporters on the bus.

TSB Detectives Arrest Juvenile in Bus-Tagging Incident

- Investigation may link 'Zoner' to series of graffiti incidents

(Feb. 28, 2007) Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau detectives late Tuesday arrested the juvenile pictured on the front page of Tuesday's Los Angeles *Times* tagging a bus carrying Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and other VIPs during a media event.

The arrest came after detectives staked out the 15-year-old Santee Education Complex sophomore's home in the 5100 block of San Pedro Street, according to a TSB news release. The juvenile's name, which is not being released, was provided to detectives by school authorities.

The youth was booked, fingerprinted and cited for vandalism, according to Sheriff's Detective Michael Shaw, the arresting officer. He then was released to his parents. The case will be filed in juvenile court next week.

The TSB investigation is expected to link the boy – who goes by the tagger moniker "Zoner" – to a series of graffiti vandalism incidents in the central city on a number of north/south streets between Washington Boulevard and Slauson Avenue.

Juveniles convicted of transit-related vandalism often are assigned by the courts to perform community service with Metro.

That service can involve cleaning up Metro-owned property and rail rights-of-way, as well as bus stops in safe areas, according to Facilities Maintenance Manager Pete Serdenis, who runs the Metro Clean program. Juveniles aren't assigned to clean graffiti off buses.

The tagging incident occurred Monday morning as the mayor, LAUSD officials and Metro representatives were inaugurating a new bus stop at Santee. Metro Line 48 was recently re-routed to help students avoid gang-infested areas near the school.

The bus transporting the VIP group and local media was pausing to make a turn at an intersection near Santee, which is located south of Washington Boulevard between Los Angeles Street and Maple Avenue, when graffiti was marked on a side window.




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Editor's Note: The California Transportation Commission, meeting in Irvine today, voted to increase LA County's share of transportation bond funding for regional highway projects. In addition to the \$730 million now recommended for the I-405 northbound carpool lane and \$387 million for widening the I-5 between the Orange County line and the I-605, the CTC is recommending funding for the I-10 carpool lane/El Monte Busway project and the I-5 carpool lane from Rt. 134 to Rt. 170.

CTC Votes to Add Funding for LA County Highway Projects

- Metro Board Chair and County Supervisor Gloria Molina issued this statement following the CTC action:

Statement by Metro Chair Gloria Molina on the California Transportation Commission's Latest Revised Proposition 1B Funding Recommendations

"The California Transportation Commission's (CTC) latest revised funding recommendations are fantastic news for all of LA County. Voters can finally feel confident that if they support transportation bonds, that funding will make its way to their end of town.

It is now safe to say that LA County is receiving its fair share of Proposition 1B monies—and that means that the work of the Los Angeles lobbying delegation that pounded the pavement in Sacramento last week has paid off. The bottom line is: Because of our teamwork, the total amount of funding allocated to LA County has more than quadrupled.

"I have always felt that the 405 Freeway carpool lane and the 5 Freeway widening project warranted full funding—but I felt just as strongly that San Gabriel Valley residents deserved their fair share, too. Thankfully, the CTC demonstrated today that they, too, understand this fact.

Now, the commission has assured us that the 605-10 Freeway connector in Baldwin Park—which is undoubtedly the San Gabriel Valley's version of the 405-101 Freeway interchange—is slated to receive \$71 million in Caltrans funding, which is within the CTC's discretion.

Though the state still opted not to fund the 10 Freeway carpool lane, as MTA Chair, I will make it a priority to find local dollars for this critical project. The San Gabriel Valley still has reason to celebrate, though—as do San Fernando Valley residents now that the CTC has pledged close to \$50 million for the 5 Freeway carpool lane from Route 134 to Route 170. All in all, today's decision is a victory for LA County."



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Paper Trail: BOC's Steve Rank with some of 2,000 temporary signs that will be posted on along the Marathon route. Photo by Ned Racine.



LA Marathon Challenges Metro Bus and Rail Service Planners

By NED RACINE

(Feb. 28, 2007) For its 22nd annual race March 4, the LA Marathon course runs from Universal City to Downtown Los Angeles, a new route presenting unique challenges for Metro's bus and rail service planners.

"There have never been as many cars on our rail lines as there will be that day," said Steve Rank, assistant operations control manager in Bus Operations Control. Rank and Rail Division Transportation Manager Bruce Shelburne planned the rerouting of 91 bus lines and a resulting increase in rail service.

Because of the Marathon's snaking route from Universal City to Flower Street and Fifth Street and then to the Convention Center, the 2007 Marathon will effect Metro's bus routes more than any Marathon before. "Every [bus line] that comes downtown changed," Shelburne said.

All Metro Rail lines will run as scheduled with increased service during the 26.2-mile race. Regular service on some bus lines will be restored as the race progresses. The farther west the bus line is, Rank explained, the sooner it will resume usual service. He estimates the Hollywood area should resume usual service by noon, with downtown bus lines back to normal by 6 p.m.

Particularly affected will be the downtown area. There will be no Metro Bus service south of Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, east of Soto Street, west of Western Avenue and north of 3rd Street.

"There's no way to detour buses around [Marathon] barricades because

[the route] curves several times,” Rank explained. The Marathon route crosses some bus lines four times.

Lines temporarily rerouted

To compensate, Metro will funnel passengers on affected bus lines to Metro Rail stations. Bus lines will be temporarily rerouted to the Blue Line’s Grand Boulevard and Vernon Avenue stations, Union Station and the Red Line’s Wilshire/Western Station.

On Line 81, for example, northbound buses will be rerouted to Union Station. Line 81 southbound coaches will be sent to the Blue Line’s Vernon Station. Shelburne estimates that 27 bus lines that usually end at another location will terminate at Union Station.

Approximately 40 Customer Information staffers will direct participants, spectators, and bus riders to the reconfigured downtown bus network. Over 2,000 temporary signs will direct Metro riders.

Marathon organizers have acquired 20,000 parking spaces within a short walk of a Metro Red Line station. Runners should park either at the starting line or the finish line, although Rank believes most runners will park near the finish line.

Consequently, Shelburne expects huge northbound ridership on the Red Line between 5 and 9 a.m. (the runners start at 8:15 a.m.) and heavy southbound traffic on the Red Line all day. Red Line trains will be running every six minutes, using 90 of the 104 rail cars.

“There’s going to be an ocean of people,” Rank said, regarding use of the Red Line on Sunday. He began planning Sunday’s bus operations in October.

Shelburne sees this year’s LA Marathon as an opportunity to introduce potential riders to the Metro Red Line. “I think for a lot of these runners, this will be their first exposure [to the Red Line]”.

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Touring the Eastside Extension tunnel project on Tuesday were, from left, CEO Roger Snoble, FTA Regional Administrator Leslie Rogers, U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary Peters, an Eastside construction worker, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and LA City Councilwoman Wendy Greuel.



Photos by Juan Ocampo

U.S. Transportation Secretary Tours Eastside Extension Project

- Mayor uses occasion to lobby for Wilshire subway extension

By DAVE SOTERO

(Feb. 28, 2007) U.S. Transportation Secretary Mary Peters toured Metro's tunneling construction project at First and Boyle on the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension, Tuesday.

The tour with media in tow was arranged by City Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, and included CEO Roger Snoble, FTA Regional Administrator Leslie Rogers, Construction Chief Rick Thorpe and Executive Officer Dennis Mori, as well as LA City Councilwoman Wendy Greuel and others.

Villaraigosa sought to provide Peters with a

firsthand view of Metro's safe, successful tunneling construction efforts. Eastside Extension builders have set a record for no lost-time injuries during more than one million work-hours spent on the job since July 2004.

The tour also served as a springboard for the Mayor's goal of ultimately extending the Metro Purple Line to Santa Monica with the help of federal matching funds. Villaraigosa said the sizable cost for subway extension will require a sizable match contribution from the federal government.



Secretary Peters and Councilwoman Greuel join Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa for a news conference at the Wilshire/Western Metro Rail station.

Following their tour, the delegation traveled to Union Station to board a subway train to Wilshire/Western, where the Mayor and Secretary conducted a news conference to discuss the importance of transit solutions within Los Angeles County and the desire to work together to leverage local, state and federal transportation dollars to relieve regional congestion.

Villaraigosa said the Wilshire Corridor was one of the most congested regions of Los Angeles County, and could benefit from the subway extension. He said it was one project of many that could benefit from Prop 1B Infrastructure Bond funds approved by California voters last November.

Peters said that, while she could not "prejudice the process" by promising federal funds for any specific project, she agreed with the Mayor that such a project could do much to help improve regional mobility.