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Bound for Glory: Rail General Manager Gerald Francis and CEO Roger Snoble take the United States Olympic Committee on a tour of ready-made infrastructure for the 2016 games.



LA's Bid for the 2016 Olympics: Metro Hosts Committee Members

By JODY LITVAK

(March 6, 2007) Remember the 1984 Olympic Games? The festive atmosphere? Free-flowing traffic? Well, Los Angeles – and Metro – might get the chance again.

The United States Olympic Committee (USOC) was in town last week to evaluate LA's bid to host the 2016 Olympic Games. The bid is being prepared by the Southern California Committee for the Olympic Games (SCCOG), which also hosted and organized the visit.

On Thursday, CEO Roger Snoble was introduced to USOC members by swimmer Janet Evans, a two-time Olympian and multiple medal winner. He highlighted Metro's ability to move the many spectators, athletes and officials during the Olympic Games. Unlike 1984 when LA last hosted the Olympics, the region now has an extensive passenger rail network that would play a critical role.

Photos by Jody Litvak

"Metro Rail will serve 22 of the proposed venues," he told Committee officials. With Metrolink included, 29 of 33 venues will be served by rail. The local bid committee has calculated that 94 percent of all the projected tickets available are for events that will be served by rail.



On board the Metro Blue Line, CEO Snoble tells the delegation: "Metro Rail will serve 22 of the proposed venues."

Local Olympic planners have in fact chosen many venues because of their proximity to rail with the Metro Blue Line playing a key role. Event "clusters" are planned for Long Beach, the Home Depot Center in Carson, and the USC/Exposition Park area. The Exposition Line, currently under construction, will also serve many of the same USC/Exposition Park venues.

Easy access to key venues

Coming into downtown, both lines would provide easy access to key event venues, the Main Media Center, and the Headquarters Hotel, all located at or near the Staples Center, the Los Angeles Convention Center, and the new LA Live complex.

The Metro Gold Line would provide access for football (soccer) at the Rose Bowl. The Gold Line Eastside Extension would provide access for hockey at East LA College. The Metro Green Line would provide access to indoor volleyball at The Forum.

Beyond rail, Snoble described Metro's bus fleet, LA's extensive network of freeways and major arterials, and how all those resources help to move large crowds.

"We also have vast experience in moving large numbers of people for special events that often occur at multiple locations at the same time," he told the group.

He pointed to Metro's track record with the annual Rose Parade and Rose Bowl, Long Beach Grand Prix, USC and UCLA football games, sporting and entertainment events at the Staples Center, the Los Angeles Marathon, 2000 Democratic Convention, and more.

A first-hand experience

Metro stepped up again Friday morning to give USOC members a first-hand experience on the Blue Line. Following visits to the Home Depot Center in Carson and the Long Beach Convention Center, the delegation boarded the Blue Line at the First Street station in Long Beach.

While they were being whisked to the Pico station and Staples Center, Snoble – accompanied by Metro Rail General Manager Gerald Francis – gave an overview of the Metro system and answered questions from committee officials and the media.

“We would like to thank Roger Snoble and everyone at Metro,” said Barry Sanders, SCCOG Chairman. “You were critical to demonstrating Los Angeles’ ability to put on a successful Olympic Games. I am sure our visitors were enormously impressed – I know I was.”

The USOC also will visit Chicago, the other American city hoping to host the Olympic Games, on March 5 and 6. On April 14, the USOC will announce which city will be the American bidder to compete internationally for the 2016 Olympic Games.

The International Olympic Committee is expected to announce its decision in 2009. Other cities expected to compete include Madrid, New Delhi, Rio de Janeiro, Rome and Tokyo.