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

Resources

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

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

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Board Approves Purchase of 100 60-Foot Articulated Buses

- Other actions include sale of parcel, Division 3 upgrade, Headquarters security, bus service changes

IN THIS REPORT:

- [Item 12.](#) Sale of Division 20 Parcel
- [Item 26.](#) Study Metro Rail Gating
- [Item 37.](#) Division 3 Project
- [Item 38.](#) Division Improvements Project
- [Item 39.](#) ATMS Upgrade
- [Item 40.](#) Rail Operations Training Facility
- [Item 41.](#) Non-Revenue Vehicles
- [Item 42.](#) RRC Storage Facility
- [Item 46.](#) Metro Headquarters Security Upgrades
- [Item 47.](#) Bus Service Changes
- [Item 52.](#) Public Safety Awareness

By JOSÉ UBALDO

(May 1, 2007) The Board of Directors on Monday approved the purchase up to 100 new 60-foot CNG buses from North American Bus Industries.

The total procurement is \$86,428,426, which includes fareboxes, radios and spare parts. The Board directed the staff to prepare a report for the Finance and Budget Committee on options for financing the bus purchase.

Delivery of the new articulated buses will be completed by spring 2008. The new 57-seat buses can seat almost 50 percent more passengers than a 40-foot, low-floor bus and will be used to improve service on the most popular Metro bus lines.

"This purchase reaffirms Metro's commitment to provide the best service for the bus riders of the Los Angeles region," said Board Chair Gloria Molina.

Metro now has a fleet of 2,500 buses of which 90 percent are fueled by natural gas. Today, Metro operates 275 articulated buses and plans to have another 20 in service by this summer.

In other action

The Board also took action on the following items:

Item 12, Sale of Division 20 Parcel. The Board carried over to its June meeting a motion to declare a small, unused portion of Metro Red Line Division 20 property to be surplus and to authorize its sale to an adjacent property owner.

Item 26, Study Metro Rail Gating. The Board approved a motion

directing the staff to engage a fare collection expert to study installation of gates at Metro Rail stations and implementation of distance-based fares.

Item 37, Division 3 Project. The Board approved a motion to set a \$1.6 million life-of-project budget for a major reconstruction of warehousing facilities at North Los Angeles Division 3. The project includes demolition of some buildings, and construction of offices and other structures.

Item 38, Division Improvements Project. A motion to upgrade five bus operating divisions was forwarded to the June Board meeting.

Item 39, ATMS Upgrade. A motion setting a life-of-project budget of \$12.1 million for upgrading the Advanced Transportation Management System was forwarded to the June Board meeting.

Item 40, Rail Operations Training Facility. A proposal to build a new training facility for Metro Rail operators and supervisors, rail controllers, maintenance-of-way inspectors and equipment maintenance specialists was forwarded to the June Board meeting.

Item 41, Non-Revenue Vehicles. A motion to establish a \$10.8 million life-of-project budget in FY 2008 to purchase non-revenue vehicles to support the Metro Bus system was forwarded to the June Board meeting.

Item 42, RRC Storage Facility. Plans to further centralize Materiel and Facilities Maintenance functions at the Regional Rebuild Center campus were forwarded to the June Board meeting.

Item 46, Metro Headquarters Security Upgrades. The Board approved a motion to provide additional surveillance cameras and card readers to enhance security at Metro Headquarters. The \$395,000 project will be partially funded by \$345,000 in federal funding through the State of California Transit Security Grant Program.

The improvements include a comprehensive closed-circuit TV surveillance system and upgrades to access card reader units.

Item 47, Bus Service Changes. The Board approved a series of bus service changes aimed at attracting new riders by providing faster service and improving efficiency by reducing service in corridors with low ridership or duplicate service.

Among the approved changes are initiating Rapid Express Line 940 between the South Bay Galleria Transit Center and Patsaouras Transit Plaza and Rapid Express Line 920 between the Wilshire/Vermont Metro Rail station and downtown Santa Monica. Also approved were a new Metro Rapid Line 760 between downtown LA and the Metro Blue Line Artesia station, and a new Metro Rapid Line 704 on Santa Monica Boulevard.

Board action on the proposed cancellation of Line 442 was carried over pending a report from the Los Angeles Department of Transportation.

Item 52, Public Safety Awareness. The Board approved a motion directing Metro Communications to work with the Safety and Security Department, the Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau and Metro Security staff to "develop appropriate, highly visible signage that will promote crime deterrence and safety on the Metro bus and Rail system."

