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Metro Advances Planning for Two New Bus Operating Divisions

- LAX Division would serve South Bay, Westside and Downtown LA; Union Division will ease overcrowding at divisions downtown and in San Gabriel Valley

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Aug. 17, 2007) If things go as planned, in 2011 Metro should have two new bus operating divisions – one across from Metro Headquarters and another adjacent to LAX.

With the working title of LAX Division, plans call for a 300-bus facility to be constructed on 24.7 acres of a 34-acre site, now designated as Lot B and used by LA World Airports for overflow parking and vehicle storage. The property, which will be on a long-term lease from LAWA, is located on La Cienega Boulevard between Century Boulevard and Imperial Highway, just west of I-405.

Metro has completed conceptual designs for the new LAX Division, says Tim Lindholm, director of Capital Projects for Facilities-Operations. He expects the environmental clearance phase will begin in September. Once the Metro Board approves funding for the \$85 million project, construction could begin as soon as summer 2009, with an opening in 2011.

Meanwhile, completion of environmental clearance for the Union Division, which will be built on Location 31 across from Metro Headquarters and

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In this overhead conceptual view, the LAX Division fronts on La Cienega Boulevard with an entrance at Lennox Avenue. The transportation building is at the bottom, with the maintenance buildings behind. Employee parking is to the left, bus parking to the right.



This conceptual view shows a maintenance shop layout that will allow articulated buses to drive straight through with no backing up.



This conceptual view shows the LAX Division as it will appear looking west from I-405.

adjacent to the Metro Support Services Center, is expected in September with the engineering design phase to follow, Lindholm says.

With Board approval of funding for the \$95 million project construction could begin in late 2008, with an date of late 2010. Built to accommodate up to 200 buses and some 500 employees, the Union Division would help ease overcrowding at divisions 1, 2, 3, 10 and 9.

Fills needs for 20 years

"These two divisions will solve our capacity issues for at least the next 20 years," says Lindholm. "All of the bus operating divisions are well over capacity and have more buses than they were ever designed to take."

Plans for the LAX Division call for a 25,000-square foot transportation building and a 100,000-square foot maintenance building capable of maintaining as many as 250 articulated buses. Metro will construct the transportation building to comply with LEEDS Gold environmental standards and the maintenance building to achieve a Silver LEEDS rating.

The division also would have a 35,000-square foot building with a fuel island, tire shop and four bus washers. Although planned to accommodate an all-articulated bus fleet, Lindholm expects the division to operate an average of 207 standard buses and 96 artics. Parking will be provided for the buses and will include 480 spaces for employees or visitors.

"It will be the biggest division we have," says Lindholm, noting that buses assigned to the facility will serve the South Bay, Westside and Downtown LA. "It can really help out with overcrowding in the South Bay and Westside sectors."

With the opening of the LAX Division, Metro plans to close Venice Division 6, now more than 100 years old and lacking the facilities to fuel and maintain CNG buses.

Although the LAX Division will be built in an area entirely devoted to aviation and industrial purposes, plans call for it to be set off by concealing walls and landscaping.

"We want to blend is as best we can with the community," says Lindholm. "It'll all be landscaped and secure."