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New Bus Lanes, New Development, New Buses and Cars on Committee Agendas

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(Sept. 18, 2007) New bus-only lanes, a big, new transit-oriented development and requests for new buses and cars are among items to be considered in September by various Board committees.

Item 9, Bus Speed Improvements. The Planning and Programming Committee will discuss a staff recommendation to seek Federal Transit Administration funding for projects aimed at improving bus speeds in the Wilshire, Van Nuys and Sepulveda transit corridors.

The Wilshire Corridor Bus-Only Lane project would be a 9.6-mile peak period bus-only lane between downtown Los Angeles and Santa Monica, estimated at a cost of \$31.5 million. The proposed lane is expected to improve bus travel times by an average of 24 percent.

The Van Nuys project calls for construction of a half-mile bus-only lane and other roadway improvements estimated at \$8.5 million. The Sepulveda project would include construction of a seven-mile bus-only lane and other roadway improvements estimated at \$42.9 million.

Item 10, North Hollywood Development. Metro's 15.6 acres of property at the North Hollywood station would be converted to a 1.72-million square foot mixed-use development under a proposal to be considered by the Planning and Programming Committee.

The "No-Ho Art Wave" project, proposed by Lowe Enterprises, would include almost 1.2 million square feet of office, retail or entertainment and community space, 562 residential units and 6,200 parking stalls.

The project, which would be built in three phases on either side of Lankershim Boulevard, would "promote the community vision for North

September Committee Meetings

Wednesday, September 19

- 1 p.m. – Planning and Programming
- 2:30 p.m. – Finance and Budget
- 3 p.m. – Ad Hoc Congestion Pricing Committee

Thursday, September 20

- 9 a.m. – Special Board Meeting – Security Workshop
- 10 a.m. – Executive Management and Audit
- 11 a.m. – Construction
- 12 noon – Operations

Thursday, September 27

- 9:30 a.m. – Full Board Meeting

Hollywood" with a design that would integrate Metro's transit operations, according to a staff report. Metro would receive annual revenue of \$10.9 million from the minimum base rent, adjusted by the Consumer Price Index every five years.

Item 26, Bus Accident Investigation Unit. Metro's System Safety and Security staff is recommending development of a Bus Accident Investigative Unit with a staff of four certified accident investigators who would be supervised by the director of Corporate Safety. The Executive Management and Audit Committee will discuss the motion at its Sept. 20 meeting.

Members of the unit would be the primary investigators of serious accidents that involve injuries, multiple vehicles and pedestrians, and those that result in fatalities. The investigators also would be able to evaluate the current bus operator training programs, recommend and develop program improvements, and institute new accident prevention programs with the overall goal of continuing to reduce accidents and improve safety.

Item 39, 260 New Buses. The Metro staff is recommending purchase of up to 260 new 45-foot composite buses over a two-year period in a motion to be discussed by the Operations Committee. Currently, 20 percent of Metro's bus fleet is made up of high-capacity 60-foot articulated buses or 45-foot lightweight buses.

Of the 260 buses, the staff proposes that 210 be powered by CNG, while the remaining 50 would have gasoline-hybrid propulsion systems. Those 50 are expected to replace some of Metro's oldest diesel buses assigned to Venice Division 6. The division is not suitable for fueling CNG buses, but could accommodate the hybrid vehicles.

Item 40, 135 Sedans. The Operations Committee will discuss a motion authorizing the CEO to award a \$2.36 million contract to Victor Buick Pontiac GMC Truck, Inc., for 135 four-door sedans. The cars will replace older vehicles in the operator relief fleet.

It was Metro's original intention to buy 103 hybrid sedans, but bids received were non-responsive because they didn't meet Metro's technical requirements for warranty and training. To get a better yield on diminishing capital funds, the agency decided to buy 135 regular sedans to replace more vehicles in the aging non-revenue fleet.

Item 41, High-Rail Truck. The Operations Committee will discuss a motion authorizing the CEO to award a contract to a firm that can offer the best price and availability for a high-rail truck with an articulated crane to carry such heavy materials as rail ties and track segments along the rail lines, to help perform repairs and to remove debris from the tracks.

An earlier bid for the truck was rejected as non-compliant with Metro's requirements. The staff also found that such trucks could be purchased for less on the open market. The contract price is not to exceed \$250,000. The new vehicle will replace an older truck that has exceeded its service life.