


[Home](#)
[CEO Hotline](#)
[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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## Metro Board OKs Negotiations for Massive Complex in NoHo

- Call for Projects, bus speed improvement program also approved

### IN THIS REPORT:

- [Rail Station Gating](#)
- [Diesel Multiple Unit Study](#)
- [Metro Ridership Plan](#)
- [Sale of Division 20 Parcel](#)
- [Expo, ACE, SCRRA Funding](#)

## Board Approves Gating at Rail Stations, OKs Plan to Boost Ridership 5% per Year

(Dec. 4, 2007) The Metro Board tackled two high-profile issues in November – one intended to increase revenues while reducing fare evasion and the other a plan to increase ridership on bus and rail lines.

The Board approved a proposal to erect barrier gates at Metro Rail stations as a means of curtailing fare evaders while cutting fare enforcement costs. It also adopted a comprehensive plan to increase ridership by 5 percent per year.

Other actions included funding for the Expo Line, the Alameda Corridor East and the SCRRA; a study of self-propelled rail cars called Diesel Multiple Units; and the sale of a small, unused parcel of Metro Red Line Division 20.

**Rail Station Gating.** Metro can expect to reduce fare evasion and lower the cost of fare enforcement when it implements a motion approved by the Board that calls for erecting 275 passenger barrier gates at Metro Rail stations.

A recent study found that Metro loses more than \$5.5 million annual to fare evasion with the current "honor system." Installing gates, combined with the use of TAP card validators at stations where gates wouldn't be suitable, would result in 84 percent of passengers being checked for fares, according to a recent study.

The analysis by Booz Allen estimates that erecting barrier gates on the subway and at "strategic" stations on the light-rail lines would cost about \$30 million, while annual maintenance would be about \$1 million.

Citing the gating analysis, the motion offered by directors Yvonne Burke and John Fasana said "evasion and fare recovery and savings from fare enforcement costs will significantly offset the cost of Metro Rail gating with a net decrease in annual operations expenditures."

According to the Booz Allen study, gating the rail stations would yield an

extra \$6.77 million in recovered fares and other savings.

Installing barrier gates also is expected to improve system safety when an Early Warning Explosive Detection System is retrofitted to the Universal Fare System and the TAP equipment.

The motion directs the CEO to return in 60 to 90 days for approval of a contract with the TAP equipment contractor to install fare gates and a modification of a contract with the TAP consultant for technical oversight of design review, testing and implementation oversight of the project.

The Burke/Fasana motion said, "While it is conceivable that an 'honor system' was effective to control crowds, ensure public safety and security plus successfully enforce fare payment 20 years ago, such a system is simply inapplicable in Los Angeles County today and in the future...."

**Metro Ridership Plan.** Metro is setting in motion a plan to increase ridership at a rate of 5 percent per year as a means of moving the agency toward becoming a world-class transportation system. The plan was adopted by the Board at its November meeting.

The plan sets three strategies for achieving the 5 percent goal: realigning service hours to improve system productivity; aggressively promoting services and targeting high ridership-return areas; and improving the exchange of information with customers and the public.

The three strategies comprise 19 operational or marketing elements that include expanding the Metro Rapid network beyond the planned 28 lines; only operating peak service with headways of less than 15 minutes; ensuring customers simple, frequent and easy connections; targeting discretionary riders; providing 24-hour trip planning; and improving operator and customer service training.

The estimated cost of the plan in FY 2009, which begins July 1, 2008, is \$2.75 million with the addition of six full-time employees. The staff will monitor transit lines to determine whether more field supervisors will be required. Additional funding also may be required to take advantage of technology innovations and cover other costs.

However, the plan "could potentially increase annual revenues by as much as \$7.9 million per year..." according to a staff report to the Board. A report is due in 90 days.

The staff report notes that Metro's rate of ridership growth since 2004 is three times the national average – 12 percent vs. 4 percent. During that period federal statistics show that many municipal transit operators experienced an average decrease in ridership of 5 percent.

Metro's largest ridership gains stem from a 50 percent growth in discretionary riders. Another key factor, says the staff report, was the introduction of the Day Pass, which "eliminated huge barriers to (riders) trying the system...."

The Communications, Operations and Countywide Planning and Development departments will work together to achieve the ridership goals.

**Expo, ACE, SCRRA Funding.** The Board approved a motion to provide an additional \$145 million for construction of Phase 1 of the Exposition

Line project. The funds increase the life of project budget from \$663.3 million to \$808.3 million.

According to a staff report, when the Phase 1 budget was developed in 2004, construction costs estimates were based on a 3.5 percent per year escalation of labor and materials. Actual costs have risen more per year than anticipated, impacting the current budget.

The Board also agreed to provide up to an additional \$112.3 million to the Alameda Corridor East (ACE) project to reflect Metro's 17 percent contribution to the project. The agency's total contribution will be \$274.3 million. Among other provisions of the motion, ACE must provide 83 percent in matching funds from other sources.

Finally, the Board approved programming \$14.6 million in Proposition C 10% funds to the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) for Metrolink's Eastern Maintenance Facility Project.

**Diesel Multiple Unit Study.** The Board authorized the CEO to award a \$484,682 contract to LTK Engineering Services to analyze the feasibility of operating diesel multiple units (DMU), self-propelled rail cars, on Metro-owned rights-of-way.

A staff report says the analysis will identify the possibilities, opportunities and issues associated with DMU or other self-propelled car technology. The contractor will evaluate DMU use on Metrolink's Ventura County, Antelope Valley and San Bernardino rail lines.

An amendment to the motion directs the CEO to include a clean-fuel alternative to the feasibility analysis contract. DMUs, operated by rail properties in the United States and around the world, can be powered by diesel mechanical, diesel electric or diesel hydraulic motors.

**Sale of Division 20 Parcel.** The Board approved a motion to declare a small, unused portion of Metro Red Line Division 20 property between 4th and 6th streets to be surplus and to authorize its sale.

The 18,731-square foot, eyebrow-shaped parcel, oriented generally north and south, lies on the southern tip of the Division 20 property near the LA River. The parcel is vacant and can't be accessed from a public street.

A report to the Board says this portion of the larger parcel is "not required for any future Metro transit projects and is recommended for disposition...."

Chalmers Santa Fe, LLC, has offered to purchase the land for \$596,000. Conditions of the sale require the new owner to grant Metro an emergency access easement from Santa Fe Avenue.