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Metro Board Approves Barrier Gates for Subway and Some Light Rail

By DAVE SOTERO

The Metro Board today approved a 10-year, \$46 million lease contract with Cubic Transportation Systems, Inc. to install barrier gates on the Metro Red Line, Metro Purple Line and selected light rail stations.

The move is an effort to prevent fare evasion, provide for seamless travel and improve transit station security. Installation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant system should take 18 to 24 months.

At the direction of the Board, Metro also will seek ways to offset gating costs through various state bond monies and Department of Homeland Security funding.

Currently, Metro operates a barrier-free "honor system." The agency loses \$5.5 million per year due to fare evasion. Overall, Metro has found a 5 percent fare evasion rate across its rail lines.

The new gating system could recover \$3-6 million annually to offset these losses as well as realize significant annual savings on fare inspector costs. Based on current forecasts, the savings enabled by the system will begin to pay for itself in the fourth year of full system operation.

Barrier gates part of TAP

Barrier gates are also a key component of Metro's emerging regional Transit Access Pass, or TAP program. TAP is an automated, electronic regional fare collection system that will create a multi-modal, multi-operator fare system for L.A. County transit riders.

"Gates are a natural evolution of Los Angeles County's maturing Metro Rail system," said Pam O'Connor, Santa Monica City Councilmember and Metro Board Chair. "They will help us keep pace with the demands of our fast growing rail ridership while ushering in the newest improvements in universal fare technology to streamline travel for our customers."

A total of 379 fare gates will be installed on all subway and selected light rail stations, including the yet-to-be-completed Mariachi, Soto and Atlantic stations on the Metro Gold Line Eastside extension.

"Metro remains the only subway operator in the country to operate a barrier-free system," said Yvonne B. Burke, Los Angeles County Supervisor and Metro Board member. "That freedom has come at a significant cost to the agency's bottom line as a result of fare scofflaws. This initiative will pay for itself, makes TAP possible, and further hardens our system to potential security threats."

Security will be augmented

Security at stations will be augmented as part of the program. Additional

video surveillance cameras will be installed at all gate entrances, and attendants will be on-hand to respond to situations or assist patrons where needed.

Once in place, the gates are expected to reduce the need for civilian fare inspectors, allowing the agency to flexibly make needed personnel redeployments when and where necessary. Metro could potentially save as much as \$7 million per year in contracted fare inspector costs replaced in part with more cost-effective Metro Transit Security personnel. Sworn law enforcement would also be freed of fare checking responsibilities at gated stations, allowing them to focus primarily on station security.

Gates will accommodate disabled patrons, children and patron-operated devices such as wheelchairs, strollers, walkers and bicycles, as well as emergency egress and access for fire-life safety devices.