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Board Alters Service Changes and Supports Research into Sales Tax Ballot Measure

- Motion eliminates proposed reduction of 100,000 service hours

By NED RACINE, Editor

(April 29, 2008) The Metro Board met before a full audience April 24 as it considered approving service changes. The Board later took the first step in placing a half-percent sales tax measure on the November ballot.

By a 12 to 0 vote, the Board approved a motion from directors Antonio Villaraigosa, Bernard Parks and Yvonne B. Burke to cancel the proposed June 2008 Tier 1, 2 and 3 service cuts. The motion excepted cuts to Limited Stop service on Lines 330, 115/315, 361, 350 and 394. Six new Metro Rapid lines would be implemented, achieving a total savings of \$4.7 million.

The motion also eliminated the proposed 100,000 revenue service-hour change scheduled for December 2008 and included in the Fiscal Year 2009 budget.

With an eye toward increased transportation funding, the Board approved a motion from Chair Pam O'Connor to authorize the CEO to:

- Research the requirements for putting a half-percent sales tax measure on the November ballot
- Develop a comprehensive package of programs and projects

This effort would include moving up schedules for those projects included in the constrained plan of the Draft 2008 Long Range Transportation Plan. It would also mean including the highest performing projects in the Tier 1 section of the Strategic Plan.

As part of the Board's approval of its Consent Calendar, it increased the budget of the Exposition Light Rail Transit Project (Phase I) by \$54 million, allowing construction of an aerial station on the Metro-owned right-of-way between Venice and Washington boulevards. This precludes construction of an interim at-grade station near the Washington/National intersection.

Culver City contributed \$4 million to the cost of the aerial station, which was originally scheduled to be built during Phase II of the light rail project.

In other actions, the Board agreed to contract with North American Bus Industries to purchase up to 260 compressed natural gas buses. Including spare parts, diagnostic equipment and training aids. The contract has a not-to-exceed value of \$170,915,626.

The Board also directed the CEO to develop a funding agreement with the City of Los Angeles and other affected parties to repair and replace some black terrazzo along the Hollywood Walk of Fame. The CEO will report to the Board within 90 days with an implementation plan and estimated costs.

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