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Items on the June agenda drew dozens of civic leaders and the general public to the June 26 meeting, filling the Metro Board Room to capacity as well as adjacent overflow areas. *Photo by Gayle Anderson*

Board Moves Forward on Half-Cent Sales Tax, Shifts LRTP Consideration Until November

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By NED RACINE, Editor

(July 1, 2008) After hearing dozens of public speakers share their vision of Los Angeles County's transportation future, the Metro Board took three steps at its June 26 meeting that will shape that future.

The Board approved:

- Drafting an ordinance increasing the transportation sales tax in Los Angeles County by one-half cent, which, if approved by voters, would provide a new funding source for Metro
- Holding over until November consideration of the Draft 2008 Long Range Transportation Plan

- Adopting the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the Canoga Transportation Corridor of the Metro Orange Line, giving shape to the project.

Item 5, Milestone for Canoga Transportation Corridor.

By selecting the LPA for the four-mile project, the Board allowed creation of the Final Environmental Impact Report and start of preliminary engineering.

The LPA extends the Orange Line on Metro rail right-of-way from the existing Canoga park-and-ride lot to the Chatsworth Metrolink station. The project will include new station platforms at:

- Canoga park-and-ride
- Sherman Way (also with a park-and-ride)
- Roscoe
- Nordoff
- Chatsworth Metrolink Station

The project will also include a bikeway and greenway.

Item 6, Congestion Mitigation Fee Feasibility Report.

The Board carried over approval of the final draft of the Congestion Mitigation Fee Feasibility Study Report. This item would have also authorized staff members to begin project selection, estimate project costs and confirm population growth forecasts.

Item 9, Agreement on Expo Project Funding.

The Board authorized an agreement with the City of Los Angeles for a \$35 million contribution for Phase I of the Expo Line light rail project.

The Financial Contribution Agreement would help satisfy a funding requirement the Board established for Phase I of the project. Under the agreement, the City would be expected to provide its \$35 million share through Fiscal Year 2010-2011.

The Board has adopted an \$862.3 million funding plan for Phase I of the Expo Line.

Item 10, Orange Line Residential Development.

The Board carried over consideration of an agreement with JPI West to develop a residential project on the Metro Orange Line Sepulveda Station park-and-ride site.

As proposed, the project, to be built on 12.5 acres, would include 560 rental units, including 20 town homes along Erwin Street and 10 live-work units on the site's southeastern side. Retail space is proposed on the ground floor of two five-story residential buildings adjacent to the station.

Item 18, Additional Ten Transit Operations Supervisors.

Approving recommendations from the Finance and Budget and Operations

committees, the Board added ten transit operations supervisors to the Fiscal Year 2009 budget.

Item 24 and 25, Positions on Current Legislation.

The Board took positions on a number of pieces of state legislation and one bill in the House of Representatives.

SB 1646 – Approved a “support” position on SB 1646 (Padilla), which would indefinitely extend the \$1 vehicle license fee surcharge for air pollution.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District has imposed the fee on the renewal of registration for any motor vehicle in the district (portions of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties).

Proceeds from the fee, currently generating \$12 million annually, are used for pollution reduction programs. The current license fee surcharge will end on Jan. 1, 2010.

SB 1221 – Approved a “support” position on SB 1221 (Ma) to modify an existing law on Transit Village Development Districts. If the legislation is approved, it would allow a city or county to create a transit village development district within a half-mile radius of a transit station; current law allows only a one-quarter mile radius.

SB 2705 – Approved a “support” position on SB 2705 (Jones). The legislation would allow public transit services to be financed under the Mello-Roos Community Facilities Act of 1982.

Mello-Roos allows local agencies to create “community facilities districts” and impose special taxes in that district for public works projects.

SB 3021 – Approved a “support” position on SB 3021 (Nava), which would establish the California Transportation Financing Authority (CTFA). Chaired by the State Treasurer, CTFA would issue or approve the issuing of bonds and would facilitate construction projects.

It would also give local agencies the authority to implement tolling projects.

CTFA bonds would be backed by revenue from transportation funds and toll revenues. Bonds would be used to construct improvements and increased capacity for the state transportation system.

HR 6002 – Approved an “oppose” position on HR 6002 (Miller). This federal legislation would prohibit charging a toll on high occupancy vehicles that were allowed to use high occupancy vehicle facilities before December 31, 2007.

Item 37, Transit Database Upgrade.

The Board authorized the CEO to commit \$234,347 to upgrade the Transit Database (TDB), the central repository for the Advanced Transportation Management System (ATMS), allowing the latest staffing schedule to be available online. Metro’s M3 maintenance system uses information from the TDB to resolve maintenance issues in real time.

The new system will allow system redundancy and increased storage capacity, as well as offer simultaneous operations reporting.

Item 39, Brake System Overhaul.

The Board carried over authorizing the CEO to award a fixed-price unit rate contract for overhaul of the P2000 light rail vehicle—in its seventh year of operation—part of regular maintenance for the light rail vehicle (LRV) fleet.

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