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During the Sept. 9 All-Hands Meeting, CEO Roger Snoble updated Metro employees on two pieces of legislation that could shape Metro's future. *Photo by Ned Racine*

## CEO Roger Snoble Offers Update on Two Pieces of Legislation Affecting Metro's Mission

- Measure R dominates Sept. 9 All-Hands Meeting

By NED RACINE, Editor

(Sept. 10, 2008) In an All-Hands Meeting on Sept. 9, dominated by a discussion of Measure R, the new half-cent sales-tax measure on the Nov. 4 ballot, CEO Roger Snoble explained what Measure R is. Snoble also detailed the restrictions preventing Metro employees from promoting the proposition.

Measure R, which will end after 30 years, would provide funds to help fix potholes, fund major highway construction, buy clean-fueled buses and build new rail lines throughout Los Angeles County to keep pace with major population and job growth.

Early in his talk, Snoble praised Metro staff for their work on another piece of legislation, Senate Bill 1422, which allows congestion pricing on the carpool lanes on segments of the I-10 (El Monte Busway) and I-110 (Harbor Transitway). See: [metro.net/fastlanes](#)

Gladys Lowe, director, Countywide Planning & Development; Ashad Hamideh, transportation planning manager "V"; and Frank Flores, executive officer, Countywide Planning & Development, all received Snoble's praise.

The CEO also mentioned the accomplishments of Carol Inge, chief planning

officer, and Stephanie Wiggins, executive officer for the Congestion Reduction Demonstration. Snoble noted that Wiggins helped develop legislation "to a point where we actually could take it to the legislature and they could actually see and understand [the legislation]."

Snoble mentioned Metro's state lobbying team, led by Michael Turner, Government Relations manager, and including Patricia Bruno, Government Relations administrator.

"We owe all these people huge recognition," he said.

SB 1422 now awaits Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's signature.

"Congestion pricing will be a major test for us," Snoble said. "If we can make it work on the 110 and the 10, there are other freeways that would be candidates for it."

The majority of the 45-minute talk was devoted, however, to Measure R.

The genesis of the sales-tax measure, he explained, grew from the two years Metro staff spent creating the [2008 Draft Long Range Plan](#).

"We just didn't have the ability to come up with anything near what the demand out there is," the CEO said. "People really want alternatives and would be willing to use alternatives. We just didn't have the resources."

Looking for those resources, Snoble said, led to Measure R.

The statutory authority for Measure R is waiting for the Governor's signature.

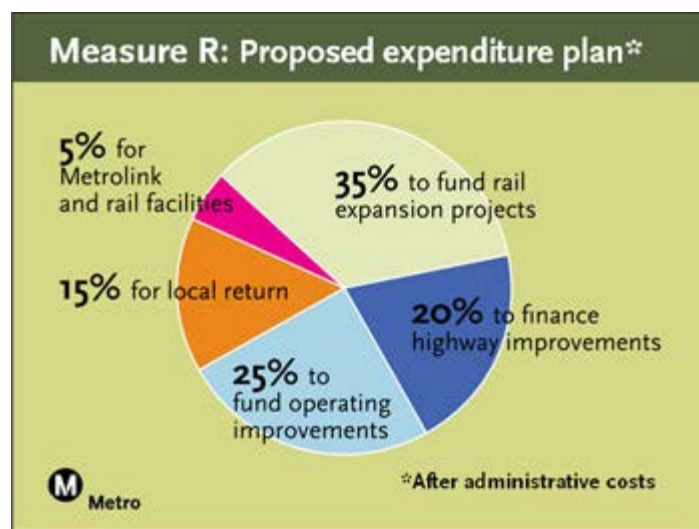
Snoble sees little help coming from state or federal funding. "This state is broke and getting more broke by the minute: It still doesn't have a budget." And even if federal funding increases, "it is still not going to be a program—in our wildest imagination—that is really going to solve the problems we have here in Los Angeles County."

Instead, Snoble told his audience, Measure R provides Los Angeles County a means to raise additional funds for transportation through the sales tax. He added that the measure would not replace two other half-cent sales-tax measures which fund transportation but would be an additional tax for 30 years.

He praised the Metro Board for supporting the measure. "It took a lot of courage for them to do that. Nine of our members—two-thirds of our Board—voted for the ordinance."

Even with the estimated \$40 billion the measure would raise over its 30-year life, the CEO explained, "We had to really make some hard decisions."

In voting to draft the measure, Metro directors included an [expenditure plan](#) that details how the sales tax—estimated to generate \$40 billion over 30 years—may be



spent. These monies also could be leveraged with state, federal and private-sector funding.

Snoble acknowledged the ongoing debate about distributing any Measure R funds fairly. He told his audience it is important for Metro to target the greatest needs: "[Metro will] focus on where the needs are and how we can solve the needs and serve the most people with the precious dollars we have. We really do think this plan could solve a lot of mobility problems in the region."

Regarding the role employees can play in the Measure R debate, Snoble emphasized the restrictions Metro staff are under. Download: [Metro & Measure R Employee Guidelines](#)

"We do have an obligation on the one hand to inform people who are interested in the measure. But we need to make sure that we are unbiased about how we portray it."

"We are prohibited from expending funds to advocate for the ballot measure," he said. "That is a very important point. Everything that we do or touch is really taxpayer supported. It is simply unfair for us to use taxpayer money to promote this measure or any other measure. We cannot use any of our facilities to advocate our position on this. Anything that is funded by the taxpayers is off limits."

Metro employees still have freedom-of-speech rights, of course, Snoble emphasized, giving the example of a Metro employee who serves as a Peeewe football coach. That individual is free to share his or her Measure R opinion with fellow coaches during his or her free time.

If employees are asked a direct question, the CEO suggested sending the questioner to the Measure R website on metro.net.

"Let the campaigns do their jobs . . . and then on Nov. 4, the people will make their choice," Snoble said.