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The Operations Committee will consider approving the initial study for the Union Division Bus Maintenance and Operations Facility, a project that will include expansion of the existing Material Support and Services Center (MSSC) near Metro headquarters.

Several Major Metro Initiatives May Take Step Forward in This Week's Board Committee Meetings

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By NED RACINE, Editor

(Sept. 16, 2008) Several major Metro initiatives will take a step forward if Board committees recommend that the Board approve actions as diverse as purchasing armored vault vans and approving the initial study of a new bus division.

Long-range initiatives such as congestion reduction, rehabilitating Metro CNG bus engines, the Interstate 405 carpool lane project and enlarging vehicle maintenance facilities are on committee agendas this month.

Sept. Committee Meetings

Wednesday, Sept. 17

1 p.m. – Planning and Programming
2:30 p.m. – Finance and Budget
3:00 p.m. -- Ad Hoc Congestion Pricing Committee

Thursday, Sept. 18

9:00 a.m. – Executive Management and Audit
11 a.m. – Construction (Cancelled)
12 noon – Operations

Thursday, Sept. 25

9:30 a.m. – Full Board Meeting

Item 5, Provide \$110 Million in Advanced Funding.

The Planning and Programming Committee will weigh providing \$110 million in advance funding for projects on Interstate 5, Interstate 10 and Interstate 405. The funding would allow the projects to proceed until the California Transportation Commission (CTC) resolves its funding shortfall.

The Interstate 5 project would add carpool and mixed-flow lanes from the Orange County line to Interstate 605. For Interstate 10, carpool lanes would be added between Interstate 605 and State Route 57.

Metro staff is requesting the Board approve the advanced funding necessary to avoid delays on the three projects.

The committee will also weigh recommending the Board adopt a \$48 million funding commitment for the Interstate 405 Northbound Carpool Lane project and enter into an agreement with Cal Trans to use those funds for that project.

Item 7, Provide \$290 Million To Support Congestion Reduction.

The Planning and Programming Committee will consider providing \$290.6 million in funding to support congestion reduction projects, part of the Los Angeles Region Congestion Reduction Demonstration Initiative. This is in keeping with a Memoranda of Understanding with the United States Department of Transportation.

Approval of this item would authorize Metro staff to negotiate and execute funding agreements with local agencies to implement demonstration projects.

These projects include enhancements to park-and-ride facilities, additional bus stops and rail stations along Interstate 10 and Interstate 110 and purchase of 57 buses for Metro and municipal operators. These buses would allow increased service along the high-occupancy toll lane corridors.

Item 28, Purchase Armored Vault Vans.

The Operations Committee will consider recommending the purchase of six armored vault vans for a total not to exceed \$275,770, including sales tax.

The vans will be used by Revenue Collection to gather revenue from ticket vending machines throughout the Metro Rail system and the Orange Line. The new vehicles would replace current vehicles approaching six years of service or 100,000 miles while offering increased protection for Revenue Collection staff.

Item 31, Purchase of CNG Engines and Repair Parts.

Continuing the rehabilitation of Metro's bus fleet, the Operations Committee will weigh purchasing 140 Cummins L10 CNG engines and the parts to repair them.

The new engines will be used to replace aging engines in the Neoplan CNG buses. In many cases, the engines have exceeded the manufacturer's warranty period.

The firm fixed-price contract for approximately \$5.4 million includes sales tax and an option to purchase up to 60 additional engines, if funding is available. The option would not exceed \$2.4 million, including sales tax.

Item 32, Increased Contract Cost for Elevator and Escalator Repair.

The Operations Committee will consider an increase in the contract cost that procures elevator and escalator repair for Metro’s transit facilities. The total contract value would increase by almost \$4.8 million, to approximately \$35 million.

Although Metro staff reports that “up time” rates for the elevators and escalators has risen since the five-year contract was awarded in Jan. 2006, a high rate of vandalism to elevators and escalators has exceeded contract requirements.

Item 33, Procurement of Light Rail Rehab and Repair Equipment.

Focusing on repair equipment to service the overhead power sources of Metro’s light rail lines, the Operations Committee will consider recommending the Board establish a budget of \$4.7 million to purchase specialized trucks.

The firm fixed-price contract would purchase three heavy-duty high-rail platform trucks to rehabilitate and maintain the overhead systems and would replace current equipment.

Item 35, Approving Initial Study of Union Division.

The Operations Committee will consider approving the initial study for the Union Division Bus Maintenance and Operations Facility, a project that will include expansion of the existing Material Support and Services Center (MSSC) near Metro headquarters.

The project includes construction of a public facility totaling approximately 360,000 square feet. Contained in the facility would be a three-story parking structure, a vehicle bridge for ingress/egress, a fueling station, a Central Cash Counting Facility and an expanded MSSC Building 1.