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## Board Recommends Metrolink Initiate Immediate Safety Improvements; Takes Steps Forward on Several Major Metro Initiatives

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By NED RACINE, Editor

(Sept. 30, 2008) The Metro Board addressed the Sept. 12 Metrolink crash at its Sept. 25 meeting by unanimously adopting a [motion](#) that recommends immediate safety improvements that it wants the Metrolink Board to pursue to prevent future train accidents.

The motion's key recommendations are to immediately staff Metrolink locomotive cabs with two qualified engineers, implement "Automatic Train Stop" technology on trains already equipped to handle the technology, and install video cameras and digital video recorders or equivalent technology to monitor engineers and other staff inside locomotive cabs.

"This tragedy requires that we do everything we can to improve the safety of our commuter rail system," said Metro Board Chair Antonio Villaraigosa, who led the motion. "We must implement as many safeguards as possible and create redundant layers of safety for the protection of transit riders throughout Southern California."

The approved motion also includes an amendment from Director Bernard Parks, asking that lessons learned from the Metrolink safety investigation that might be applied to Metro Rail operations be reported to the Board at its October meeting.

### Item 5, Provide \$110 Million in Advance Funding.

The Board voted to provide \$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.

The Board also approved a \$48 million funding commitment for the Interstate 405 Northbound Carpool Lane project and entering into an agreement with Cal Trans to use those funds for that project.

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

The Board agreed to provide \$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 Memorandum of Understanding with the United States Department of Transportation.

Approval of this item authorizes 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 Board approved 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.**

To continue the rehabilitation of Metro's bus fleet, the Board approved 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 Board increased the cost of the contract 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 January 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 used to service the overhead power sources of Metro's light rail lines, the Board established a budget of \$4.7 million to purchase specialized maintenance trucks, if funding is available..

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 Board approved 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.

As part of this action, the Board amended the Fiscal Year 2009 Facilities-Operation budget to add approximately \$9.5 million and two full-time equivalent positions (a project manager and senior engineer) for project management and engineering support.

—Dave Sotero contributed to this report