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Click on image to keep up with the Congestion Reduction Demonstration Project on the project's website at metro.net.

## Metro to buy 41 new CNG Buses for enhanced service as part of Congestion Reduction Demonstration Project

By RICK JAGER

The Metro Board of Directors approved the purchase of 41 compressed natural gas (CNG) buses at the Board meeting March 26. The buses will be used to enhance public transit service as part of the Congestion Reduction Demonstration Project (ExpressLanes).

These new state-of-the-art CNG buses will be used to support the ExpressLanes demonstration project, a federally funded project aimed at testing pricing strategies to alleviate congestion, maximize freeway capacity usage, and fund additional transit alternatives on High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes along the I-10 (El Monte Busway) and I-110 (Harbor Freeway Transitway) corridors.

Funding for this new project is being provided by a special \$210 million grant from the US Department of Transportation. These expansion buses will increase the size of Metro's bus fleet and will be used in late 2010 to enhance transit service along these two heavily traveled corridors.

The ExpressLanes project is a one-year demonstration program that will convert existing HOV lanes on the I-10 and I-110 freeways to toll lanes. The project is expected to be in operation by December 2010. Present day carpoolers, vanpoolers and public transit users will not be charged a toll. Solo drivers, who currently are not allowed to use the lanes, will be allowed to use the ExpressLanes by paying a toll.

The new 45-foot buses will be manufactured by North American Bus Industries (NABI) at a cost of \$28.4 million. A total of 57 new buses will be used as part of the ExpressLanes project with Foothill Transit scheduled to purchase 10 additional buses, Gardena Transit will buy two and Torrance Transit will purchase four new buses in addition to Metro's fleet.

The project will provide the opportunity for individuals to choose better transportation alternatives and provides a choice for solo drivers to shift to more convenient express transit options and vanpools that serve the

corridor route.

The new buses will be assigned to a new Bus Rapid Transit Line which will operate on the HOV lanes along the I-10 and I-110 corridors.

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