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## FY10: Going Places



The operation of the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension to East Los Angeles is among other major transportation advances in the coming fiscal year. *Photo: Gary Leonard*

## Metro to Hold Public Hearing May 20 on Proposed FY10 Budget

By RICK JAGER

(May 12, 2009) Metro will hold a public hearing on a draft \$3.905 billion budget for Fiscal Year 2009-10 on Wednesday, May 20, at 2:30 p.m. in the third floor Board room at Metro Headquarters, One Gateway Plaza next to Union Station in downtown Los Angeles.

Metro directors will consider adopting the budget, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2009, at their Thursday, May 28, meeting that starts at 9:30 a.m. at Metro headquarters.

CEO Art Leahy has proposed a spending plan that is \$507 million or just under 15 percent more than the current Metro budget. The increase is largely due to a spate of new highway and transit building projects such as construction of a 10-mile northbound carpool lane on the I-405 freeway from the 10 to 101 freeways. Altogether, Metro will undertake \$636 million in new programs in FY10, funded largely with federal stimulus funds and the new Measure R transit sales tax that will be collected starting July 1.

Among other major transportation advances in the coming fiscal year, Metro will begin operation of the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension to East Los Angeles, purchase 219 compressed natural gas buses for Metro and its contract carriers (the purchase of larger buses will increase Metro's bus seat capacity 1 percent), continue construction of the Expo light rail line from downtown Los Angeles to Culver City, begin construction of a four

mile extension of the popular Metro Orange Line busway from Canoga Park to Chatsworth and advance numerous planning studies for new transit projects throughout Los Angeles County.

As mandated by Measure R, there will be no general Metro fare increase in FY10, and fares for seniors, students, the disabled and Medicare recipients will stay at current levels for five years. The new transit sales tax that begins July 1 will keep Metro fares low, however, the Metro Board must still grapple with higher operating costs and cuts in other revenue.

California lawmakers have completely eliminated state transit assistance, which, in recent years has provided Metro with about \$100 million annually in operating dollars. Local Props. A & C transit sales tax revenue also is projected to decline 10 percent over the current fiscal year due to the recession. In addition, Metro is negotiating new contracts this spring with its major labor unions representing operators, maintenance employees and clerks.

Despite the drop in revenue, Metro will not raise fares or consider major service reductions. However, Metro has cut expenses by more than \$130 million and imposed a hiring freeze. It also will dip into reserves to balance the FY10 budget.