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Chief Operating Officer Carolyn Flowers Resigns

She Accepts Top Job as CEO of the Charlotte Area Transit System in North Carolina

(Nov. 17, 2009) Carolyn Flowers, Metro's Chief Operating Officer who oversees bus operations with an annual operating budget of \$900 million and more than 6,000 employees, has resigned from Metro to accept the position of Transit Executive Director and CEO for the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) in North Carolina.

In submitting her resignation, Flowers said she plans to stay at Metro until the end of the year "to assist in the completion of some important issues in this Board cycle."

Expressing both congratulations and regret, CEO Art Leahy announced the resignation of Flowers in an all-staff memo issued Monday. "Obviously, this a great loss to Metro, but it is a

"Leaving the friends and work family at Metro is my biggest regret. I will truly miss the dedication of the Operations team. They have been great to work with. I will sorely miss my staff; they have made my job easier. I will also miss the comrades on the management team. I will miss all my friends all over the agency. The messages that they have been sending me will stay in my heart always." -- Carolyn Flowers

significant opportunity for Ms. Flowers," Leahy said.

Flowers said that the decision to accept the position as CEO of a major transit agency was a difficult one. "I was not looking to leave the Metro family but I could not pass up a significant opportunity to pursue my long-term personal and career objectives," she said.

Challenges and accomplishments

Flowers' list of challenges and accomplishments in her Metro career is a long one.

As head of labor negotiations since 2007, Flowers was the chief negotiator in reaching recent labor agreements with Metro's four largest unions. The labor contract extensions are going to the Board in this cycle for ratification.

It is Labor Relations, as well as long hours devoted to Service Planning and Development programs, that she considers the most rewarding.

Her list of successes during her time at Metro include working on labor negotiation teams to establish better working relationships with labor partners; a reduction of accidents in the last two years; an increase in the number of accident-free days - with no lost time due to injuries - as well as a continued reduction in worker's compensation costs; implementation of wellness initiatives with UTU; and a significant reduction in customer complaints.

Challenges, on the other hand, were funding constraints and deficits, completing the consent decree, and matching service with demand.

"I will miss not being a part of the future implementation of Measure R projects. I will miss the topography of Los Angeles, and its cultural diversity. I wish I could be both places at once," she said.

The appointment of Flowers to head a major transit agency was announced in a press release issued Monday by the City of Charlotte.

The press release noted Flowers, who will report "will oversee county-wide transit planning and transit management activities including developing and promoting a long-term regional vision for transit services; managing existing transit services; designing and managing the future transit system, and providing oversight on in-house contracted transit services."

Carolyn Flowers is a veteran of nearly 35 years in financial management positions in industry and government.

Prior to her appointment in 2007 to Chief Operating Officer at Metro, Flowers previously served as Metro Executive Officer of Administration, and as Deputy Executive Officer of Finance in the Office of Management and Budget.

Flowers joined the agency in January 1993 as an administrative analyst in the Equal Opportunity/Contract Compliance department, before being promoted to chief administrative analyst in Bus Operations and Procurement.

During 1998 and most of 1999, she was head of the budget department for the City of Beverly Hills and returned to Metro in October 2000 as Deputy Executive Officer of Finance.

After completing an MBA in finance and marketing at UCLA, Flowers was a financial analyst and budget officer for more than five years at Rockwell International Automotive Operations at Michigan and Ohio offices.

She also worked for Wang Laboratories in Massachusetts for more than 10 years in financial management positions and as district sales administration manager for computer hardware and software.

A member of the National Forum of Black Public Administrators and the Women's Transportation Conference, she is a native of Los Angeles.

In 2008, Flowers was named "Woman of the Year" by the Los Angeles Chapter of the Women's Transportation Seminar and awarded several other honors including the American Stroke Association's Ambassador Award and a special recognition award by the greater Los Angeles African-American Chamber of Commerce.

-- from Gayle Anderson

