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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Metro Rapid Bus Program to Reach Half Way Point June 27 in Planned 28-Line System

Five years after its two-line debut, the Metro Rapid bus program will reach the half way mark of a planned expansion to 28 lines with the debut of three new lines on Monday, June 27. The start of service on Fairfax Metro Rapid Line 717, Beverly Metro Rapid Line 714 and Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus Rapid 3 line on Lincoln Boulevard will bring the total number of Rapid bus lines to 14 and expand Rapid service to 205 route miles.

"From the moment the red Metro Rapid buses began rolling down the Wilshire/Whittier corridor and Ventura Boulevard in 2000, Los Angeles had a hit on its hands," said Frank Roberts, Board chair for the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority. "Metro Rapid delivered on the promise to significantly reduce bus commute times and the public responded by flocking to this great new service."

Los Angeles County Supervisor and MTA Board member Zev Yaroslavsky, a long-time Metro Rapid supporter said, "I'm gratified, but not surprised, by the success of our Metro Rapid bus program. L.A. transit riders have always shown us by their patronage that - to borrow a tag line - 'if you build it, they will come.'"

Fairfax Metro Rapid Line 717 will operate Monday through Friday from approximately 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. from the Metro Red Line Hollywood/Vine Station along Hollywood Boulevard and then south along Fairfax Avenue to the West L.A. Transit Center. In addition to connecting with the Metro Red Line subway and several local bus lines, Line 717 also will connect with Wilshire-Whittier Metro Rapid Line 720, the new Beverly Metro Rapid Line 714, and the Hollywood-Pasadena Metro Rapid Line 780.

Fairfax Metro Rapid Line 717 is approximately 6.7 miles in length and will serve the cities of Los Angeles and West Hollywood and landmarks including Farmer's Market, The Grove, Museum Row, and the Hollywood Walk of Fame. The line will operate every 10 minutes during peak periods and every 18 minutes during off-peak hours.

Beverly Metro Rapid Line 714 will operate every 15 minutes Monday through Friday during peak hours only, 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., from the Metro Blue Line Grand Station via Grand/Olive in downtown Los Angeles, then along Beverly Boulevard to Santa Monica Boulevard and Cañon Drive in the City of Beverly Hills, a distance of approximately 11.6 miles.

In addition to providing connections to the Metro Blue Line and several local service bus lines, Beverly Metro Rapid Line 714 also will connect with the Metro Red Line, Wilshire-Whittier Metro Rapid Line 720, Vermont Metro Rapid Line 754, Crenshaw Metro Rapid Line 710, the new Fairfax Metro Rapid Line 717, and Vernon-La Cienega Metro Rapid Line 705. Line 714

will serve the cities of Los Angeles, West Hollywood and Beverly Hills, and landmarks including the Beverly Center and the Beverly Hills Civic Center area.

Rapid 3 is part of the City of Santa Monica's new Rapid Blue bus service, and marks the first time a Rapid line has been operated by a municipal operator. The newly designed buses will travel from Wilshire and 4th Street in Santa Monica along a densely populated 10-mile stretch of Lincoln Boulevard to the Metro Green Line Aviation Station near LAX.

Rapid 3 will serve Santa Monica, Venice, Playa Vista, Marina del Rey and Westchester, and will operate every 15 minutes, Monday through Friday, from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. The line will also connect with Wilshire/Whittier Metro Rapid Line 720 and will serve the LAX Transit Center, Westchester Recreation Center, and the Third Street Promenade.

The Rapid Blue buses will feature a new color scheme of dark metallic blue with yellow lettering to differentiate them from regular Big Blue buses. The buses will include luggage racks, reading lights, low floors for faster boarding, and transit signal priority technology to keep green lights green longer. They will also use cleaner burning liquid natural gas fuel. Newly designed bus stations utilizing the Rapid Blue color scheme will also be placed along the Rapid 3 route.

Metro programmed \$736,000 for the installation of the transit signal priority system on the Lincoln Boulevard portion of Rapid 3 and \$1,278,160 for construction of the line's station stops on Lincoln Boulevard.

Metro Rapid has succeeded in reducing passenger commute times on its existing 11 lines an average of 25 percent as the result of several key system attributes including a transit signal priority system developed by the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT), less frequent stops (approximately every 0.8 miles at major intersections versus 0.2 miles for local service), and the low floor design of the Metro Rapid buses that allows for faster and easier boarding and alighting.

LADOT's transit signal priority system tracks the movement of each Metro Rapid bus and determines its approximate speed via loop detectors embedded in the pavement along the route. Depending on the proximity of a Metro Rapid bus to a signalized intersection, the system will extend green signal time up to 10 seconds or activate a green signal up to 10 seconds sooner to reduce the amount of waiting time at intersections.

As a result of its competitive advantage over local and limited-stop bus service and speeds that rival the private vehicle, Metro Rapid has attracted large numbers of discretionary riders as well as people who depend on public transit. Metro Rapid's 11 existing lines have generated total average weekday boardings of 140,000.

The Metro Rapid Bus Program debuted on Wilshire-Whittier and Ventura Boulevards in June 2000. Nine other lines were added on Vermont Avenue and South Broadway (Vermont Metro Rapid Line 754 and South Broadway Metro Rapid Line 745, December 2002); Florence Avenue and Van Nuys Boulevard (Florence Metro Rapid Line 711 and Van Nuys Metro Rapid Line 761, June 2003); Crenshaw Boulevard (Crenshaw Metro Rapid Line 710, February 2004); Vernon-La Cienega and Soto Street (Vernon-LaCienega Metro Rapid Line 705 and Soto Metro Rapid Line 751, June 2004); Hollywood-Pasadena and Hawthorne Boulevard (Hollywood-Pasadena Metro Rapid Line 780 and Hawthorne Metro Rapid Line 740, December 2004).

The Metro Rapid program was selected as a semifinalist in Harvard University's 2002 Innovations In American Government Awards as an

outstanding example of creative problem solving in the public sector.

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