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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Metro Introduces New Metro Express Line 577X Between El Monte and Long Beach

- Free rides offered Dec. 19-20, with Grand Opening Ceremony scheduled for Dec. 16.

Beginning Monday, December 19, Metro will launch a brand new Metro Express line that will speed commuters between El Monte and Norwalk in about 30 minutes and Norwalk to Long Beach in 20 minutes, cutting riders' commute times nearly in half. Rides on the new Metro Express Line 577X will be free to the public December 19 and 20.

Utilizing HOV lanes on the 605 Freeway for most of its 28-mile route, the new line will make only four local stops. Service will begin at the El Monte Transit Center, a major transit hub with connections with 27 other bus lines, then travel directly to the Norwalk Metro Green Line Station in about 30 minutes. It will then continue on directly to Long Beach, stopping only at the VA Medical Center and California State University Long Beach campus 20 minutes later. End-to-end, Metro Express Line 577X will take about 50 minutes, a distance that could take a solo driver up to an hour and a half to complete during morning and afternoon rush hours.

Metro Gateway Cities will celebrate the introduction of the Metro Express service at a special public grand opening ceremony on Friday, December 16 at 10 a.m. The event will be held at the Long Beach Veterans Administration Medical center, located at 5901 E. 7th Street.

"The 577 Metro Express is part of Metro's new, growing express bus service that links Los Angeles with quick and frequent service and increased travel options for riders," said Alex Clifford, Gateway Cities Sector General Manager. "This is a corridor we've never had service on before, so we're blazing a new trail here for our transit patrons."

Buses will depart weekdays every 20 minutes during the peak periods of 5:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. and every 30 minutes during the off-peak times of 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. After 8 p.m., buses will run every 60 minutes until 11 p.m. Complete timetable information on stops in both directions are available at www.metro.net and on board the buses.

Its Northernmost stop at the El Monte Transit Center provides a wealth of bus connections to and from destinations such as the LA County/USC Medical Center, Cal State LA, Pasadena City College and downtown LA. Metro Local and Limited Lines include 70, 76, 170, 176, 267, 268, 270, 370, 376, 484, 487, and 490. Several Foothill Transit and El Monte Trolley Lines also provide service to the transit center.

At the line's midpoint, the Norwalk Metro Green Line Station provides transit access to LAX and Redondo Beach. Twelve bus lines serve the station: Metro Local and Limited Lines 111, 115, 121, 125, 270, 315 and 460, Long Beach Transit Lines 172, 173, and Norwalk Transit Lines 2,4 and 5.

The final stops at the VA Medical Center and California State University Long Beach provide convenient connections to downtown Long Beach, Seal Beach and Signal Hill, L.A. and Orange Counties. Bus lines serving these stops include Long Beach Transit Lines 81, 91, 92, 93, 94, 171, 96 ZAP, D and OCTA 1, 50 and 60.

For travelers driving to these stops, 2,000 free parking spaces are available at the El Monte Transit Center and 1,700 free spaces are available at the Metro Green Line Station in Norwalk.

Metro will be offering a reduced fare of \$1.25 each way on the line through the end of December. Beginning in January, the cash fare for the service will be a \$1.25 base fare plus a 50 cent zone charge between El Monte and Norwalk, and a 50 cent zone charge between Norwalk and Long Beach. Patrons wishing to travel between Norwalk and either El Monte or Long Beach will pay a cash fare of \$1.75 (base fare plus one zone) each way, and customers traveling from El Monte to Long Beach will pay a cash fare of \$2.25 (base fare plus two zones) each way. Discount passes, and other fare media, are also available.

Metro Express Line 577X is the second service in the Metro Express bus program. It joins Metro Express Line 450X which debuted in June 2005, which whisks rush-hour commuters from the Artesia Transit Center in the South Bay along Harbor Freeway HOV lanes to downtown Los Angeles in 25 to 30 minutes.

Metro Gateway Cities is one of five operating units in Los Angeles County created to better serve its customers at the local level. Cities in its region include Artesia, Avalon, Bell, Bellflower, Bell Gardens, Cerritos, Commerce, Compton, Cudahy, Downey, Hawaiian Gardens, Huntington Park, La Habra Heights, Lakewood, La Mirada, Long Beach, Lynwood, Maywood, Norwalk, Paramount, Pico Rivera, Santa Fe Springs, Signal Hill, South Gate, Vernon and Whittier.

For more information on Metro Gateway Cities services, visit www.metro.net/gatewaycities. For information and Metro timetables, visit the web at www.metro.net or call 1-800-COMMUTE.

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