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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Metro Completes Installation of 59 Metro Blue Line L.E.D. "Train" Active Warning Signs at All Left-Turn Lanes on Long Beach Blvd. and Pacific Avenue in the City of Long Beach**

Following the success of similar active warning "TRAIN" signs installed in downtown Los Angeles, Metro has completed the installation of 59 new train-activated L.E.D. "TRAIN" signs at all left-turn lanes on Long Beach Boulevard and Pacific Avenue in the City of Long Beach.

The new L.E.D. "TRAIN" signs are activated each time a Metro Blue Line train approaches an intersection, warning motorists waiting to make a left-hand turn that a train is approaching the intersection.

The goal of the safety program is to help mitigate the left turn accidents in the street-running portion of the Metro Blue Line, a 22-mile light rail line that operates between downtown Los Angeles and Long Beach.

"This is fantastic news for motorists in the Long Beach area as they navigate the streets of Long Beach where the Metro Blue Line operates," said Long Beach City Councilwoman and Metro Board Member Bonnie Lowenthal. "Anything we can do to improve the safety of the Metro Blue Line is welcome and it is hoped that these new "TRAIN" signs will do the trick in warning motorists that a train is approaching the intersection."

All intersections with left turn pocket lanes have now been retrofitted with the new "TRAIN" signs along with the replacement and relocation of the "T" train signals with Lunar Bar indications that Metro Blue Line train operators use to navigate their trains through the intersection.

"We have had great success with a similar program in downtown Los Angeles having reduced left hand turn accidents by 71 percent over the past six years," said Metro Rail General Manager Gerald Francis. "Our goal is to have no accidents at all, but we need driver cooperation and, hopefully, these new train indicator lights will warn motorists that a train is approaching."

Over the last few years, Metro's Corporate Safety staff has been implementing the Rail Safety Improvement Program. This program, under the leadership of Abdul Zohbi, Metro's Systems Safety Manager, has been initiated to mitigate all types of hazards and reduce, if not eliminate, rail incidents. To date, staff has installed a total of 39 "TRAIN" signs in the downtown Los Angeles area and just recently completed the installation of 59 additional signs in Long Beach. The cost of the Long Beach project is estimated at \$500,000.

The new signs complement other safety equipment additions for the Metro Blue Line that have included the installation at various crossings of swing gates, pedestrian gates, four quadrant gates, median islands and additional warning lights including fiber optic signs designed to warn pedestrians that a second train is coming through the intersection.

"Metro staff worked alongside traffic signal engineers from the City of Long Beach in order to complete this project and we owe them a lot of gratitude," said Francis. "We couldn't have done this important safety improvement project without their assistance."

Nearly 50 percent of all train vs. vehicle accidents are the result of illegal left turns on the "street running" segments of the Metro Blue Line alignment in Los Angeles and Long Beach where Metro Blue Line trains operate on city streets as opposed to the exclusive right-of-way found in the mid segment of the alignment.

In addition, Metro continues to engage in an aggressive community outreach program aimed at reducing the number of accidents. The program includes safety presentations by Metro Community Outreach staff to fairs, schools, housing association and community group meetings as well as door-to-door contact with residents along the alignment.

Editors Note: Digital photos of the "TRAIN" signs installed in the Long Beach area are available by contacting Rick Jager at Metro Media Relations, (213) 922-2707

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