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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Metro to Hold a Public Meeting June 22 in Pasadena on the Route 710 Tunnel Technical Feasibility Assessment Study to Extend the Freeway

Metro will hold a public workshop meeting in Pasadena to share with local cities, agencies and the general public the findings of a recently concluded feasibility assessment study of constructing a tunnel alternative to extend the 710 Freeway from its current terminus at Valley Boulevard in Los Angeles to the I-210 Freeway in Pasadena.

The public workshop will be held in Pasadena on Thursday, June 22, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Lake Avenue Church, 393 N. Lake Avenue in the Sky Room located on the 2nd Floor. The public meeting will be followed by similar presentations that are planned before City Council meetings in the cities of Alhambra, La Canada Flintridge, Los Angeles, Pasadena, San Marino and South Pasadena and the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (COG).

Over the past year, Metro staff, in coordination with its consultant team, has been conducting a feasibility assessment of a bored or mined tunnel to extend the Route 710 to Pasadena. The assessment has been performed in conjunction with the technical staff from Caltrans, the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), and the cities of Alhambra, La Canada Flintridge, Los Angeles, Pasadena, San Marino and South Pasadena.

Representatives from these affected agencies formed the Route 710 Tunnel Technical Feasibility Assessment's Working Group. Although the Working Group provided input throughout the study, its technical contribution does not represent individual members' or their agencies' endorsement of the assessment results.

Generally, the study concluded that the tunnel concept is feasible from the physical and environmental perspectives. Additionally, the study concluded that the closure of the 710 Freeway gap will relieve congestion in the area. The report also notes that potential environmental impacts could be minimized, eliminated or mitigated and that no insurmountable environmental issues have been identified that would preclude further consideration of the tunnel alternative.

The study found that both the tunnel boring machine (TBM) and sequential excavation method (SEM) were technically feasible options for constructing a tunnel in this area. The study further identified several possible tunnel configurations including both stacked and non-stacked configurations with up to four lanes of traffic in each direction. Scenarios also included truck and non-truck movement on the tunnel extension.

The technical feasibility assessment considered a myriad of tunnel alternatives to extend the 710 freeway with construction cost ranging from approximately \$2.3 billion to \$3.6 billion (2006 dollars).

Over the past 40 years, alternative concepts have been proposed and evaluated to complete the 710 Freeway and close the 4.5-mile gap in the corridor. To date, none of the previously proposed and evaluated alternatives has been successful in satisfying the regional mobility needs and community/environmental concerns.

These alternatives have included traditional surface freeway alternatives through the communities of Los Angeles, Pasadena and South Pasadena. Many members of the community were concerned with the impacts of these surface alternatives and consequently, opposed the extension of the 710 Freeway.

In response to this reaction from the community and to lessen the potential impact of completing the extension, a tunnel concept was proposed for assessment as a potential option to the surface alternatives.

Caltrans, The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), SCAG, and Metro support the completion of the 710 freeway to relieve regional and local traffic congestion and to enhance regional air quality.

Metro staff will collect and summarize all community feedback resulting from these series of public meetings and will return to the Metro Board of Directors in the fall of 2006.

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