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One Year Anniversary: Metro Orange Line Proves to be an Overwhelming Success in First Year

- Line's success paves the way for new transitway improvements, connections and amenities for Valley commuters

On the eve of its one year anniversary, the Metro Orange Line has proven to be an unqualified success in providing fast, frequent transit service across the east-west portion of the San Fernando Valley, and more planned connections and amenities will soon make it even better.

In the last 12 months, Metro estimates the Orange Line has logged more than 6 million boardings. Ridership has risen nearly every month, with an average of 21,000 average weekday boardings recorded in September, nearly three times what agency planners had expected when the line opened Oct. 29, 2005. Weekend ridership also has remained strong, with average Saturday and Sunday boardings in September both reaching new records of 13,413 and 10,887 respectively.

The Valley's 14-mile exclusive transitway – called a train on rubber tires – parallels the congested 101 Freeway and links the communities of North Hollywood, Valley Village, Valley Glen, Van Nuys, Tarzana, Winnetka and Woodland Hills with high-capacity bus service that connects commuters directly to the Metro Red Line subway to Downtown Los Angeles.

"In our wildest dreams, none of us would have predicted triple the ridership we originally projected in the first year," said Los Angeles County Supervisor and Metro Board member Zev Yaroslavsky. "At a cost of only \$330 million, a build time of just over two years and high ridership, the Orange Line is one of the most cost-effective transportation projects in the history of Metro, and arguably, the country."

Independent research has proven that the Metro Orange Line is helping to reduce traffic on the congested 101 Freeway. UC Berkeley research, sponsored by the L.A. Times, found that weekly traffic through the south San Fernando Valley from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. has sped up seven percent, from an average 43 mph to 46 mph. Since the line opened, the amount of time that morning commuters waste stuck in congestion on the Valley portion of the 101 Freeway declined 14 percent.

Metro has ambitious plans for improving Orange Line service, connections and amenities for Valley commuters.

The agency is working to extend the Metro Orange Line and other bus services along key North/South Valley corridors. Environmental studies are now underway to extend the Metro Orange Line north to the Chatsworth Metrolink Station using Metro-owned railroad right-of-way. Similar studies are also being considered to provide dedicated Bus Rapid Transit service on Van Nuys Boulevard.

A new Metro Orange Line station will soon open on Canoga Avenue providing West Valley commuters with a convenient location with which to access the transit line. Along with the new station, Metro is building a 611-space park & ride lot, bringing the total number of available parking spaces along the line to more than 3,800 spaces.

New plans for joint development will make several Metro Orange Line stations vibrant places to work, live and play. Metro's Request for Qualifications, which identifies developers and conceptual designs, is now available for the development of 18 acres of Metro-owned property at North Hollywood, where the Metro Red and Orange Lines meet. Consisting of 2 million square feet of development, Metro envisions a town center that preserves the character of the NoHo Arts District and contains a mix of uses, including housing, commercial and office space. The Metro Board may act on these bids early next year.

Still more joint development is proposed on other parts of the line. Metro is working with the community to design guidelines for an RFP to develop property at the Sepulevda Metro Orange Line Station. At the Balboa

Station, Metro is considering a ground lease that could bring 31,000 square feet of new office building space and parking to the site.

Lastly, Metro is also planning to fully renovate the historic Lankershim Depot immediately adjacent to the North Hollywood Metro Orange Line Station. The \$3.6 million project will fulfill the desires of the community to restore this facility at its present location for eventual use as a customer service center.

For more information about the Metro Orange Line, visit WWW.METRO.NET. For Metro Bus/Rail information by phone, call 1-800-COMMUTE.

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