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Metro Board Votes to Move Forward Four Major L.A. County Transportation Projects

Marking a significant day in the advancement of key transportation projects in the L.A. region, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) Board of Directors today authorized four major transportation projects to move forward to their next phase of work.

Metro's Alternatives Analysis recommendations – considered the first phase of project work conducted over the past year and a half – were approved for three projects: the Westside Extension Transit Corridor Study to West Los Angeles; the Regional Connector Transit Corridor Study in Downtown L.A., and; the Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 Study in the eastern portion of L.A. These projects will now enter into environmental review, which precedes final design and construction.

At this same meeting, the Metro Board also certified the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Canoga Transportation Corridor Project, a move that clears the way for construction to begin later this year on a four-mile extension of the Metro Orange Line from the Canoga Park park and ride lot north to the Chatsworth Metrolink Station in the West San Fernando Valley.

"Advancing these transit projects closer to construction and completion sends a clear signal that greater mobility for Los Angeles is inevitable," said L.A. City Mayor and Metro Board Chair Antonio Villaraigosa. "We can and will build our way out of this recession with projects that are ready to go and that will directly stimulate our local economy."

Project funding will be made available, in part, through Measure R, the countywide half-cent sales tax approved by voters during last November's general election. Proceeds will begin to be collected July 1, 2009, and could fund up to \$40 billion in overall transit, highway, pedestrian and bicycle improvements over the next 30 years.

The Westside Extension Transit Corridor Study is the proposed extension of the Metro Purple and/or Red Line subway to Santa Monica. In addition to the No Build and Transportation Systems Management Alternatives, the Board approved two build alternatives for further environmental review and preliminary engineering: a Metro Purple Line extension via Wilshire Boulevard and another that also includes a spur from the Metro Red Line in Hollywood via Santa Monica Boulevard.

The Board approved for further environmental review Metro's recommended alternatives for the Regional Connector Transit Corridor Study that would provide seamless travel between Long Beach and Pasadena, connecting the soon-to-open Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension with the 7th Street/Metro Center Metro Blue Line Station and the future Expo Line. Metro will now study possible at-grade and underground alternatives via Second Street in Downtown L.A.

The Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 Study proposes to continue the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension now under construction. The rail extension between downtown Los Angeles and East Los Angeles is scheduled to open in mid-2009. In studying a possible continuation of the line from the future Atlantic station terminus, Metro recommended several alternatives for further analysis, including rail line extensions via State Route 60, Beverly, Whittier and Washington Boulevards.

At the conclusion of the next phase of evaluation for the Westside Extension, Regional Connector, and Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2, the Metro Board of Directors will be asked to select a Locally Preferred Alternative for each project. Public outreach will continue to be a key component for all projects, and public comment incorporated throughout all project phases.

For additional information on all of these transportation projects, visit metro.net. For transit trip planning assistance over the phone, call 1-800-COMMUTE.

Editors Note: "Metro" should be used when referring to this agency.

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