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EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT AND AUDIT COMMITTEE
MARCH 16, 2006

SUBJECT: THE 2006 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

ACTION: APPROVE 2006 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM AMENDMENT

RECOMMENDATION

Approve an amendment to the 2006 Federal Legislative Program to add a request to seek funds under the Federal Transit Administration's new Small Starts Program.

ISSUE

The Board of Directors adopted the 2006 Legislative Program on December 15, 2005. That document provides guidance to staff on legislative issues and policy as a means of advancing and protecting the agency's authority and the transportation interests of Los Angeles County.

Since the 2006 Legislative Program was adopted, Metro has been given the opportunity to seek federal funds from a new discretionary grant program operated by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The program, known as the Small Starts Program, provides funding for small public transportation capital projects that run along dedicated corridors or fixed guideways. It is expected that between \$100 to \$200 million will be available in Small Starts funding for Fiscal Year(FY) 2007.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

As detailed in a March 3, 2006 Board Box regarding the federal Small Starts Program, Metro has been notified that funds for Small Starts projects for FY07 are being considered through the annual appropriations process, which is now underway. Metro has reviewed projects that are eligible for Small Starts funding from those projects that already have Board approval and are included in Metro's current Long Range Transportation Plan. Following this analysis, staff has developed the "Metro Rapid System Gap Closure Project" which proposes to implement seven Metro Rapid lines that help complete the countywide Metro Rapid system, as well as to implement bus-only lanes and related facilities on the San Fernando/Lankershim and the Sepulveda corridors.

These project elements come from the Board-adopted Metro Rapid Program, the Board-approved San Fernando Valley North/South Transit Corridor Major Investment Study and a previous Board commitment at the Metro Universal Station.

OPTIONS

The Board of Directors could choose to recommend other bus rapid transit projects or determine that pursuing Small Starts funding is unnecessary for the agency. Failure to amend the legislative program with respect to the pursuit of Small Starts funding could make it more difficult to compete for Small Starts funding in the future.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Should Metro succeed in securing funds for a Small Starts project, it would represent a new source of federal funding for the above stated projects. This would free up funding previously programmed for these project elements for use on other Metro projects.

BACKGROUND

SAFETEA-LU (Section 5309(e)) created the Small Starts program to fund small transit corridor projects. In developing the program, Congress sought to fund bus rapid transit projects that are less expensive, smaller in scale, and more quickly implemented than major fixed guideway projects. Small Starts projects must have a total project cost of less than \$250 million, and are eligible for up to \$75 million in federal funding.

The statutory federal share for the Small Starts Program is 80% of the total project cost and cannot exceed a total federal allocation of \$75 million. The program will be funded with a \$100 million takedown from the New Starts apportionment in FY07, and \$200 million annually thereafter, and continuing until SAFETEA-LU expires in FY09.

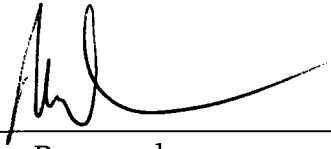
NEXT STEPS

Should the Board of Directors approve the modification of its 2006 Legislative Program to permit seeking Small Starts funding, Metro Government Relations staff will work to secure an appropriation for the Metro Rapid System Gap Closure project in the FY07 Transportation appropriations bill.

ATTACHMENT

A. The Metro Rapid System Gap Closure Project

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Metro Rapid System Gap Closure Project

Network Gap Closure

Construct Metro Rapid service on seven Metro Rapid Lines at various locations in Los Angeles County. These lines will include phase one attributes (bus signal priority, branded buses, branded stations, real-time next trip passenger information, frequent service, headway-based schedules, increased station spacing, and low-floor high-capacity buses) and are as follows:

- Pico Metro Rapid 17.3 miles
- Atlantic Metro Rapid 25.1 miles
- West Olympic Metro Rapid 12.1 miles
- Garvey-Chavez Metro Rapid 14.7 miles
- Manchester Metro Rapid 13.5 miles
- South San Fernando Metro Rapid 13.6 miles
- South Sepulveda Metro Rapid 12.8 miles

San Fernando/Lankershim Metro Rapid Corridor Improvements

- Construct peak hour bus-only lanes on the San Fernando/Lankershim Metro Rapid along Lankershim Boulevard. The project includes roadway upgrades to Lankershim Boulevard, to accommodate heavier vehicles, and improvements to curbs and gutters.
- Construct a 500 space multi-story parking garage at the Sylmar/San Fernando MetroLink commuter rail station. Land acquisition may be required as will reconfiguration of bus passenger loading/unloading.
- Open an additional portal at the North Hollywood Metro Red Line station at the Orange Line terminus on the west side of Lankershim Boulevard. There is currently only one Red Line station portal on the east side of Lankershim Boulevard.

Sepulveda Metro Rapid Corridor Improvements

- Construct a north-bound peak hour bus-only lane on the Sepulveda Metro Rapid (10.8 miles) from Ventura Boulevard (in Sherman Oaks) to Chatsworth Street. The project includes improvements to curbs and gutters.
- Construct an underground passenger access tunnel connecting the eastern terminus of the Ventura Metro Rapid with the Universal City Metro Red Line station.