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**SUPERVISOR RIDLEY-THOMAS HAILS MTA STAFF
RECOMMENDATIONS TO BUILD \$1.7 BILLION LIGHT RAIL
ALONG CRENSHAW TO LAX TRANSIT CORRIDOR**

LOS ANGELES -- Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas today hailed a Metropolitan Transportation Authority staff recommendation to build light rail – rather than deploy a rapid bus alternative – through the 10-square-mile Crenshaw to Los Angeles International Airport Corridor.

The Supervisor called the recommendation, which the MTA’s Crenshaw/LAX Line Committee is scheduled to vote on Nov. 18, a “big victory” for residents and expressed confidence that the plan will be adopted by the MTA Board of Directors at its Dec. 10 meeting.

“The \$1.76 billion investment is long overdue and will provide congestion relief, improve air quality and serve as economic catalyst,” said the Supervisor, who as an MTA director has succeeded in moving up the timeline for the project from 2029 to sometime between 2016 and 2018.

The light rail recommendation, he noted, was the overwhelming choice of the 400 people who attended four formal public hearings during the past few weeks for the project which will traverse the city of Los Angeles, Inglewood, Hawthorne, El Segundo as well as unincorporated areas of the County and LAX.

In response to community concerns about adverse visual impacts, the staff recommendation calls for below grade construction between 60th Street and Victoria Avenue.

According to MTA projections, the light rail alternative will generate 7,800 jobs, more than twice as many as the bus rapid transit alternative. About 4,400 will be in construction and Supervisor Ridley-Thomas has called for an aggressive local hiring program.

The light rail, the Supervisor said, would be the first alternative transportation project to relieve congestion on the 405 Freeway and other north-south arteries in the western portion of Los Angeles County.

“This will also provide an efficient, clean mode of transportation that will connect to Los Angeles International Airport,” the Supervisor said.

A motion the Supervisor pushed through the MTA Board last month gives the corridor project “first priority” to new federal funding the agency will pursue, making the project eligible for an additional \$485 million that would be used for additional underground construction and a station serving Leimert Park.

For more information on the MTA’s staff recommendations, log onto: http://www.metro.net/board/Items/2009/11_November/20091118P&PItem9.pdf

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