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MTA APPROVES LONG-RANGE PLAN GIVING CRENSHAW/LAX CORRIDOR PROJECT AND GOLD LINE FOOTHILL EXTENSION FIRST PRIORITY TO NEW FEDERAL FUNDING OPTIONS

LOS ANGELES – Acting on a motion by Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority today unanimously approved a long-range plan that gives the Crenshaw/LAX Corridor project and Gold Line Foothill Extension “first priority” to new federal funding the agency will pursue.

The corridor project, championed by Supervisor Ridley-Thomas, will now be eligible for \$485 million in potential new funding in addition to \$1.7 billion previously budgeted for the line.

If the MTA is successful in attracting additional federal dollars, the money will be used to address public safety and economic concerns identified by residents along the corridor

Supervisor Ridley-Thomas called today’s development a “big victory” for the project, which will connect the airport with the Green Line and the Expo Line under construction between downtown and Culver City. The project is also designed to relieve congestion on the 405 Freeway.

“Safety, equity and economic development were our driving issues,” the Supervisor said. “The welfare of our residents should not be comprised. This project is long overdue and we intend to develop a robust local hiring plan.”

Next month, the MTA Board will vote on whether to operate special bus lanes along the corridor or build light rail. Supervisor Ridley-Thomas supports the light rail option.

Supervisor Ridley-Thomas’ motion, co-authored by Supervisor Mike Antonovich and Duarte City Councilman John Fasana, was the product of new alliance between regions of the county that historically have competed for funding.

The Gold Line Foothill Extension, which extends from the current terminus in Pasadena to the City of Claremont/Los Angeles County, will share first priority to new federal money to address the project’s funding gap.

Today’s development culminated a week in which a bi-partisan, 14-member coalition of the County’s Congressional delegation sent a letter to the MTA Board, urging the panel to develop “a move inclusive, regional and long-term strategy” to maximize federal funding.

The members of Congress expressed concern that the MTA – which is investing \$40 billion in voter-approved Measure R money over the next 30 years – was “not positioning itself well to receive its fair share” of federal funding.

On a motion by Supervisors Ridley-Thomas, the Board of Supervisors Tuesday called on the MTA board to address concerns raised by the Members of Congress.

Those concerns were echoed Wednesday by eight members of the state Legislature in a separate letter to the MTA.

“Metro’s request of the federal government must be geographically representative of the entire region,” the state lawmakers, who represent Assembly and Senate district in the County, said in their letter.

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