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Bringing Affordable Housing to Transportation Hubs

On Thursday, The Metro Board of Directors approved a landmark proposal to set aside 35 percent of all apartments and condos built on land owned by Metro for affordable housing. This initiative, co-authored by Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas and Mayor Eric Garcetti, and unanimously adopted by the Board Thursday, marks the first time that Metro will offer its land at below-market cost for projects to accommodate affordable housing.

Metro will also look into contributing \$10 million to attract public and private partnerships to establish a \$70 million fund to build affordable housing. This is part of a larger initiative spearheaded by Supervisor Ridley-Thomas to create affordable housing, commercial and residential developments on county-owned real estate along major public transportation lines.

“A disproportionate number of residents in my district live in overcrowded conditions and spend more than 50 percent of their income on housing,” said Supervisor Ridley-Thomas. “Low income households are more dependent on public transportation and represent the vast majority of riders on the Metro system. This initiative means good business for Metro and it is also the right thing to do.”

In addition to the Metro housing initiative, Supervisor Ridley-Thomas has led efforts to use Los Angeles County and Metro assets to address economic development and housing needs.

Available properties owned by the County of Los Angeles and Metro could bring up to 500,000 square feet of potential new development into the marketplace. Together they include a 4-acre parcel of land on Exposition Boulevard in Los Angeles at the intersection of the Crenshaw/LAX and Expo Lines, as well as a 40,000-square-foot property on Redondo Boulevard in Inglewood which is also adjacent to the Crenshaw/LAX line. These properties can be used for mixed commercial and residential use near transit hubs.

The \$2-billion Crenshaw/LAX Rail Line, which is projected to serve thousands of commuters by 2019, is funded through Measure R, a half-cent sales tax approved by voters in 2008. The 8.5-mile train route would run through the historic Crenshaw Corridor, known as the epicenter of African-American culture in Los Angeles. It is projected to have a daily ridership of 13,000 to 16,000 once completed in 2019. Plans are already in place to build a major retail center with a Target store, a new Kaiser medical facility, and a revitalized Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza next to the rail line.

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