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Marks Beginning of Major Rehabilitation of Blue and Orange Lines

San Diego – The Metropolitan Transit System Board of Directors today voted unanimously to purchase 57 ultra-short, low-floor light rail vehicles from Siemens Transportation Systems, Inc. The vehicles, which will be purchased for \$205.2 million, will be manufactured in Sacramento, California. Delivery of the first vehicles is expected in late 2011. The source of funding is TransNet II and California Proposition 1B bonds.

“This is a major purchase of new vehicles and allows MTS to bring the convenience of low-floor light rail vehicles to our entire system,” said Harry Mathis, MTS Chairman of the Board of Directors. “It also marks the beginning of rehabilitation project for our Blue and Orange lines to significantly enhance our operations and customer experience.”

The low-floor cars are 81 feet in length, which is nine feet shorter than the 11 S-70 low floor vehicles that MTS uses on the Green Line through Mission Valley between Old Town and Santee. The shorter configuration will allow the use of three-car trains on C Street in Downtown San Diego without blocking intersections.

The primary advantage of the low floor technology is that it allows level boarding for all customers, making ingress and egress much easier, safer and faster. In addition to the S-70s, MTS currently uses two other models of light rail vehicles that have steps for passengers or lifts for people using mobility devices. The new cars will feature seating for 60 people and position all of the seats to face the middle of the car to improve visibility for passengers and security personnel. All models are manufactured by Siemens.

MTS has negotiated with Siemens and the Utah Transit Authority to allow MTS to assume an option for a minimum of 57 and a maximum of 65 rail cars under UTA’s existing contract with Siemens.

“Ever since we introduced low-floor cars on the Green Line, people have wanted them throughout the system,” Mathis said. “The new vehicles will allow us to phase out cars that we purchased over 30 years and realize significant maintenance cost savings.”

The MTS board of directors also received a status report on the Blue Line and Orange Line rehabilitation project, a \$234 million project to raise and improve station platforms, replace old rail and overhead electrical contact wire, and improve switching, signaling and crossovers. Work is scheduled to begin in early 2010 and be complete by the end of 2013.

In addition to Transnet II and Proposition 1B, funds for this portion of the project are from

American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (Federal stimulus) and from Federal Formula Funds.

The work is anticipated to create up to 350 jobs.

“This is a major and necessary investment into this region’s infrastructure,” said Mathis. “The Blue Line moves about 60,000 people a day and some of the rail is more than 70 years old. The overhead electric wire is at the end of its useful life and switching and signaling improvements will make operations much more efficient. This is first major investment in this line since it was built in 1980.”

All 11 Blue Line stations along the 16-mile corridor from the Barrio Logan to Beyer Boulevard stations will receive complete makeovers. All other station platforms on the Blue Line and Orange Line (from downtown to La Mesa Boulevard) will be raised by two inches to accommodate the ramps on the low-floor vehicles.

MTS operates a 54.3-mile light rail transit network, 95 fixed bus routes, and ADA Complementary Public Paratransit Service in the San Diego region. In FY09 it set a system record by carrying more than 91 million passengers.

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