

**Resolution of the Board of Directors  
In Support of the Metro Solutions Phase 2 Implementation Plan**

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The Greater Houston Partnership strongly supports the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County, Texas (METRO) in its endeavors to provide and improve regional transit with the METRO Solutions Phase 2 Implementation Plan.

The Partnership's 10-year strategic plan identifies light rail expansion and mass transit improvements as key initiatives in building infrastructure that sets Houston apart, achieves quality of life goals, and attracts a vibrant business environment. We must look ahead to accommodate sustainable business and residential growth in our region, and we must incorporate multimodal solutions to meet our transportation needs. Mass transit is a key component to cleaning up our region's air quality.


METRO is facing the challenge of providing new remedies to meet expected higher demand and usage of its existing services as a result of the region's forecasted dynamic population and economic growth, a population growth that will include a projected 700,000 newcomers by 2012.

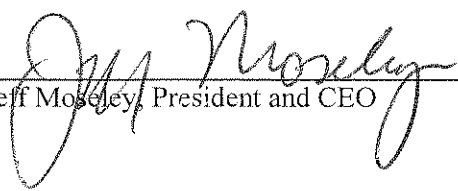
METRO Solutions Phase 2 will contribute an estimated 60,000 jobs— 10 percent of the Partnership's goal of 600,000 jobs by 2015. METRO's contribution of \$2 billion in capital investment to the Houston region continues as construction is launched on four Guided Rapid Transit corridors this year. This construction should be commenced without delay.

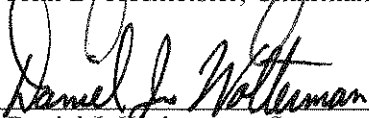
Highlights of the METRO Solutions Phase 2 Implementation Plan include:

- **Nearly nine miles of Light Rail Transit** - an eight-mile University line from the Uptown/Galleria and Greenway Plaza areas to the University of Houston and Texas Southern University, and a one-half-mile extension of the existing Red Line north to a proposed Intermodal Facility;
- **21 Miles of Fixed-Guideway Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)** - North, Southeast, East End and Uptown (all of which will be converted to Light Rail Transit when ridership reaches a cost-effective level);
- **28 Miles of Commuter Rail Transit (CRT)** - along U.S. 290 from Cypress Park & Ride to Intermodal Facility and along U.S. 90A from Missouri City to Fannin South Park & Ride/Rail Station;
- **40 Miles of Signature Bus Service/Suburban Bus Rapid Transit** - Southeast Transit Center to Texas Medical Center, Uptown to U.S. 90A CRT line, Gessner and Texas 249/Tidwell;
- **10 New Transit Facilities** - Northern Intermodal Facility serving different transit modes (Commuter Rail, Light Rail and BRT), five Transit Centers and four Park & Ride lots; and
- **HOV/HOT Conversion** - modify one-way, reversible High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes to two-way High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes.

The Metro Solutions Phase 2 Implementation Plan provides for expansion of mass transit as an important alternative, increasing mobility and thereby improving the quality of life in the region.

  
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John D. Hofmeister, Chairman

  
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Jeff Moseley, President and CEO

  
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Daniel J. Wolterman, Secretary



MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** July 18, 2007

**TO:** Greater Houston Partnership Board of Directors

**FROM:** Jim Dannenbaum, Chairman  
Transportation and Infrastructure Advisory Committee

**SUBJECT:** Resolution of the Board of Directors in Support of the Metro Solutions Phase 2 Implementation Plan

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**RECOMMENDATION**

The Greater Houston Partnership strongly supports the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County, Texas (METRO) in its endeavors to provide and improve regional transit with the METRO Solutions Phase 2 Implementation Plan.

The Partnership's 10-year strategic plan identifies light rail expansion and mass transit improvements as key initiatives in building infrastructure that sets Houston apart, achieves quality of life goals, and attracts a vibrant business environment. We must look ahead to accommodate sustainable business and residential growth in our region, and we must incorporate multimodal solutions to meet our transportation needs. Mass transit is a key component to cleaning up our region's air quality.

METRO is facing the challenge of providing new remedies to meet expected higher demand and usage of its existing services as a result of the region's forecasted dynamic population and economic growth, a population growth that will include a projected 700,000 newcomers by 2012.

METRO Solutions Phase 2 will contribute an estimated 60,000 jobs— 10 percent of the Partnership's goal of 600,000 jobs by 2015. METRO's contribution of \$2 billion in capital investment to the Houston region continues as construction is launched on four Guided Rapid Transit corridors in this year. This construction should be commenced without delay.

Highlights of the METRO Solutions Phase 2 Implementation Plan include:

- Nearly nine miles of Light Rail Transit - an eight-mile University line from the Uptown/ Galleria and Greenway Plaza areas to the University of Houston and Texas Southern University, and a one-half-mile extension of the existing Red Line north to a proposed Intermodal Facility;
- 21 Miles of Fixed-Guideway Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) - North, Southeast, East End and Uptown (all of which will be converted to Light Rail Transit when ridership reaches a cost-effective level);

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- 40 Miles of Signature Bus Service/Suburban Bus Rapid Transit - Southeast Transit Center to Texas Medical Center, Uptown to U.S. 90A CRT line, Gessner and Texas 249/Tidwell;
- 10 New Transit Facilities - Northern Intermodal Facility serving different transit modes (Commuter Rail, Light Rail and BRT), five Transit Centers and four Park & Ride lots; and
- HOV/HOT Conversion - modify one-way, reversible High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes to two-way High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes.

The Metro Solutions Phase 2 Implementation Plan provides for expansion of mass transit as an important alternative, increasing mobility and thereby improving the quality of life in the region.

#### **BACKGROUND**

In 2003, voters approved a referendum allowing METRO to proceed with Phase 2 of the METRO Solutions Implementation Plan. In addition to expanding METRO's newly built light rail transit (LRT) system, Phase 2 included provisions which expanded and improved bus service and added Transit Center and Park and Ride facilities.

In 2005, the Partnership board of directors approved a revised METRO Solutions Plan. Utilizing convertible Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) technology allowed METRO to increase the program's planned 36 miles of rapid transit to 97 miles while reducing cost per mile.

The revised METRO Solutions Phase 2 Implementation Plan provides a fiscally sound and viable solution to the expansion of the current 7.5-mile Light Rail Transit (LRT) Red Line with a mix of affordable technologies on five different lines. Provisions of the plan include the addition of four Park & Ride facilities and routes, five Transit Centers and one Intermodal Facility, as well as required LRT facility improvements necessary to maintain and, where possible, expand the Red Line's level of service.

In order to meet demand and improve connectivity of the overall system, the METRO Solutions Phase 2 Implementation Plan identifies and includes the implementation of new cross-town and Signature bus routes in high-growth transit corridors. The METRO Solutions Phase 2 Implementation Plan also provides for the installation of bike racks on all Local Route buses by the end of the calendar year, 2007, encouraging yet another segment of our region's transit users to access the METRO system and their destinations per their preferences.

Additional elements of the plan aim to reduce roadway congestion and address commuter needs. Through conversion of the highly successful High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lane system to a High Occupancy Toll (HOT) Lane system with dynamic pricing, METRO expects to further increase those lanes' usage and value, and reduce traffic

congestion on the freeways. The plan also includes the addition of three Commuter Rail Transit lines in the highest commuter-traffic corridors, and METRO is presently in discussions on plans with other agencies and private entities across the State to make their operation begin sooner rather than later.

Since the announcement of the revised plan, METRO held numerous stakeholder and community meetings. Community input was utilized in determining alignments which would benefit the greatest number of citizens in the Houston region. The Partnership board of directors adopted a resolution in 2006 supporting METRO's compliance with the federally mandated process for selecting BRT/LRT routes.

Two of the rapid transit projects, the North and Southeast Corridors, were included in the Bush Administration's 2008 Fiscal Year Budget. Construction on four of the projects will begin in 2007. The scheduled date for groundbreaking is July 7, 2007. The fifth project, the University Corridor, is expected to begin construction in 2008.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

The METRO Solutions Phase 2 Implementation Plan's resultant \$2 billion investment and 60,000 additional jobs boosts local economic development, making a positive impact on the economy for years to come.

In the METRO Solutions Phase 2 Implementation Plan, METRO has established a goal of 35% Small Business Enterprise (SBE) participation to include a 21% Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) goal in its contracts. METRO's SBE and DBE Program offers participants a support network that encourages competition and business management acumen to remain vital after METRO contracts.

METRO Solutions Phase 2 Implementation Plan has already paid more than \$27 million for conceptual, preliminary and technical engineering work, of which more than \$11 million - or approximately 42% - has been paid to SBE / DBE firms.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

The Greater Houston Partnership will communicate its support of the METRO Solutions Phase 2 Implementation Plan to elected officials on the local, state and federal levels. The Partnership will communicate with members of Congress to ensure that METRO Solutions Phase 2 receives full federal funding.

#### **RESOURCES REQUIRED**

This recommendation can be implemented with available Greater Houston Partnership staff, and within the current operating budget.