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NEWS RELEASE

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SANTA MONICA'S BIG BLUE BUS TO LAUNCH NEW "RAPID BLUE" BUS SERVICE TO LAX AND METRO GREEN LINE AVIATION STATION

*FIRST MUNICIPAL-RUN BUS RAPID TRANSIT (BRT) SYSTEM IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY TO
INTRODUCE NEW LINE AT JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE WITH METRO ON JUNE 20*

SANTA MONICA, Calif. – June 8, 2005 – The City of Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus has announced it will begin offering passengers bus rapid transit (BRT) service along one of its most heavily traveled and popular routes beginning June 27. The new service, called Rapid Blue, will include newly designed upscale buses and bus stations, and will travel along a densely populated 10-mile stretch of Lincoln Boulevard to LAX and the Metro Green Line Aviation station. A joint press conference with Metro, which will announce a major milestone in its Metro Rapid bus program, is scheduled for June 20 at 10 a.m. at the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica to introduce the new line to the public.

The launch of the new Rapid Blue service marks the first time a BRT line has been operated by a municipal operator in Los Angeles County. The first route of the new service, called Rapid 3, will travel from Wilshire Boulevard and 4th Street in Santa Monica to the Metro Green Line Aviation Station near LAX. Rapid 3 will make just 26 stops on a round trip, saving passengers approximately 10 minutes of travel time each way. Rapid 3 will serve the coastal areas of Santa Monica, Venice, Playa Vista, Marina del Rey and Westchester. It will operate Monday through Friday during the morning and afternoon peak hours of 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. Buses will run approximately every 15 minutes.

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The regular Big Blue Bus line currently connects over 800 passengers a day with the Metro Green Line Aviation Station. For the convenience of commuters, the Rapid 3 schedule has been designed for maximum integration with the Metro Green Line station light rail schedule. The Rapid 3 line will also connect with the Wilshire/Whittier Metro Rapid Line 720 and will serve the LAX Transit Center, Westchester Recreation Center, and the Third Street Promenade.

The Rapid Blue buses will sport a new color scheme of dark metallic blue with yellow/gold lettering to differentiate them from the regular Big Blue Bus line, and to maximize visibility. The new buses will offer state-of-the-art design elements such as luggage racks, reading lights, low floors for faster boarding, and signal priority technology to keep green lights green longer. They will also use cleaner burning and less polluting liquid natural gas fuel. Newly designed bus stations utilizing the Rapid Blue color scheme will soon be placed along the Rapid 3 route, and future bus-only lanes are also being planned to further expedite travel time.

Stephanie Negriff, director of transit services for the city's Big Blue Bus system, says the timing couldn't be better for the new rapid line. "Now that summer is here and there's so many great places to visit along the coast, including the beach, I think people will really enjoy using this new service," says Negriff. In addition to offering comfort and a new upscale design, Negriff thinks residents and visitors will find the faster service to and from the airport very convenient and economical. The fare to LAX will remain at its current price of 75 cents each way.

Metro's partnership with the new Rapid Blue service consists of funding \$736,000 for the installation of the transit signal priority system along Lincoln Boulevard and \$1.3 million for the construction of bus stations along the Rapid 3 route. Along with Rapid 3, Fairfax Metro Rapid Line 717 and Beverly Metro Rapid Line 714, which also begin service June 27, are the latest additions to the Rapid bus program launched by Metro in June 2000.

The Big Blue Bus and Metro joint press conference is planned for June 20 at 10 a.m. at the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica (at 3rd Street & Wilshire Boulevard). The media will be invited to tour one of the new Rapid Blue buses, and Metro will also have a Metro Rapid bus on

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hand for tours. A community event is planned following the press conference, and will include live music from local musicians, an opportunity to enter a drawing for a trip via Southwest Airlines to Las Vegas with a stay at the Luxor Las Vegas and tickets to Blue Man Group, and tours of the new buses. Passes for free rides on Rapid 3 will also be given out at the event.

For more information, please contact Dan Dawson at the Big Blue Bus at 310-458-1975 ext. 5831 or visit www.bigbluebus.com.

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