



www.bigbluebus.com

NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 20, 2010

Big Blue Bus Ready to Move Forward with Plans for New High Tech Bus Stops in Santa Monica

- ***All city stops to be updated with enhanced amenities and a Santa Monica-inspired design.***
- ***New features to include simplified maps, timetables, real-time schedule information and added shade / protection “spots.”***

SANTA MONICA, Calif. – After gaining City Council approval at last night’s meeting, the Big Blue Bus has announced it is ready to begin the next phase of its bus stop redevelopment project that will eventually replace or enhance all 360 bus stops around the city. The agency’s goal is to have the first new stops in place by December 2010.

The proposed new stops will include a contemporary and creative design that utilizes sustainable materials, passenger friendly maps and timetables, and improved amenities to enhance the rider experience. All stops will also be equipped with GPS-based technology to provide different kinds of real-time schedule information to waiting passengers.

“One of the most essential elements of this project is enhancing the information we provide to our customers,” said Stephanie Negriff, Big Blue Bus director of transit services. “We want to give riders real-time schedule information wherever we can to help their commutes, and we also want to provide simple, stop-specific maps and timetables so that taking transit is easy.”

Negriff noted that while improving technology was a key element, it was also important to make the waiting environment as welcoming as possible. Extensive sun and shade studies were done at locations throughout the city, resulting in a conceptual design that will provide passengers with the maximum shade possible during the hottest parts of the day.

“We hope our regular passengers will find these improved and beautiful new shelters useful and comfortable, and we’re also hoping they’ll attract some new riders, as well,” said Negriff.

Los Angeles design firm Lorcan O’Herlihy Architects (LOHA) was selected from among several top architectural firms to design the project. In addition to site surveys of the stops, they also held focus groups and outreach presentations with residents, bus riders, business groups, community organizations and city staff to determine what key attributes should be considered.

Their findings showed that the ultimate design should – in addition to providing the maximum shade possible – enhance the streetscape, allow for maximum visibility, offer easily readable transit information, and provide for the most current and future transit technologies to be implemented. In addition, the stops/shelters needed to be as impervious as possible to vandalism, adhere to ADA regulations and be cost effective to maintain. It was also imperative to include sustainability into the design to reduce energy costs.

-more-

“We have a long standing commitment to operating eco-friendly,” said Negriff, “so these new shelters have to have a minimal impact on the natural environment.” The agency plans to use advanced sustainable technologies and materials, and simplified construction and maintenance systems to accomplish this objective.

LOHA’s Santa Monica-inspired conceptual design, called “The Blue Spots,” is clean and unobtrusive, and was designed to enhance the city’s ambiance. The structures will be flexible and able to adapt to various sized locations around the city.

All of the new stops will feature:

- A simplified Big Blue Bus system map
- A localized map showing areas within walking or biking distance
- A listing of all bus lines that use that stop
- A timetable and route map of lines stopping at that location
- Estimated travel times to key points along the route
- An ID number that will allow riders to access next bus arrival information via cell phone
- A shelter canopy

In addition to the above features, locations with medium and high volume rider patterns will also receive:

- Signs that broadcast real time bus arrival information
- Seating (select low volume stops may also receive seating)
- Trash and recycling containers
- Lighting that illuminates the structure and waiting area

Nearly 100 stops fit into the medium and high volume categories, including the stops on Pico Boulevard at Santa Monica College and at Lincoln Boulevard.

The project has been budgeted at \$6.9 million, with \$3 million coming from Federal Transit Administration funds and nearly \$2.5 coming from stimulus funds. The Big Blue Bus will provide the remaining funding.

The conceptual drawings of the new bus stops and shelters will go through a thorough review and comment period before the final design is selected for production. Renderings are now available for public review and comment at www.bigbluebus.com. The website also includes an online forum for feedback, and a schedule of upcoming community meetings where the new stops and other topics of interest will be discussed.

The first community meeting is scheduled to take place February 20 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the L.A. City Library at 2920 Overland Avenue in Los Angeles.

About the Big Blue Bus

The Big Blue Bus operates a fleet of over 200 energy efficient vehicles, transporting more than 80,000 passengers a day across a nearly 52-square mile service area. Nationally recognized for its long-standing commitment to a cleaner environment, the entire fleet operates on alternative fuels, including liquefied natural gas (LNG), which helps cut emissions by over 80 percent. Serving Santa Monica and the Los Angeles area since 1928, the Big Blue Bus has an 86 percent on-time performance record and has won numerous national awards for its customer service, safety and efficiency.

###