



**For Immediate Release**

August 27, 2020

Michelle Vega, Communications Director  
Office: (213) 974-5555 / Cell: (818) 652-1268

## **METRO BOARD APPROVES ADVANCEMENT OF MAJOR PROJECTS FOR NORTH LOS ANGELES COUNTY**

LOS ANGELES COUNTY — The Metro Board of Directors today unanimously approved actions to move forward on two projects identified by North Los Angeles County leaders and residents as high priorities under Measure M. This will include a construction support services contract for the I-5 North Capacity Enhancements project in the Santa Clarita Valley and a rail corridor service development plan for the High Desert Corridor project in the Antelope Valley.

The Board's approval of the construction support services contract for the I-5 project is a critical milestone that is required for the procurement process of a construction contractor and to advise and assist throughout the construction of the project, which is set to begin in Spring 2021. The project will add new north and south carpool lanes between the SR-14/I-5 interchange and Castaic and will add southbound truck-only lanes through Newhall. The project was approved by L.A. County voters as a "first decade" project with funding through Measure M. It also received significant grant funds from state and federal agencies.

"The I-5 is the backbone of commerce in the Western U.S. and this project is the realization of many years of effort and partnership with local, state and federal stakeholders," said Supervisor Kathryn Barger who represents the North County region. "I want to acknowledge the Metro project team and Caltrans for their close coordination on this project, in addition to some key local leaders who have tirelessly advocated over the years, including Victor Lindenheim and the I-5 Golden State Gateway Coalition, and the North County Transportation Coalition Executive Director Arthur Sohikian."

To move the High Desert Intercity Rail Corridor closer to the “shovel-ready” stage, the Metro board’s approval of a rail corridor service development plan will include: at least 15% preliminary design; operations, safety and maintenance plans; rail modeling and simulation analysis; fleet and technology planning; station access analysis; right-of-way impacts; integration with existing rail systems; and financial modeling and potential funding support. The plan will be the result of a funding partnership between XpressWest, Metro, and the California State Transportation Agency.

To ensure that the plan moved forward expeditiously, Supervisor Barger agreed to advance \$1.5 million from her 5th District Proposition A discretionary funds, which will ultimately be repaid by Metro through Measure M funds at a later date.

“This is a transformative project for Palmdale, the Antelope Valley and the greater Los Angeles region,” observed Barger. “We have an exciting private sector partner in XpressWest in addition to our state partners. Working together, we are bringing this project to the shovel-ready stage. After many years of coordinated efforts between Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties I’m very excited to see us move another step closer to delivering a one-seat, high-speed ride from Palmdale to Las Vegas and linking to our Metrolink system.”

“A future extension to Los Angeles through Palmdale will provide Southern California residents full access to our high-speed rail service to Las Vegas”, added Husein Cumber, chief strategy officer for XpressWest. “Greater connectivity and mobility brings more economic opportunities, jobs and positive environmental benefits.”

The High Desert Intercity Rail Corridor was environmentally cleared in 2016 and is designed to link Palmdale to Victor Valley with a high-speed rail service that will seamlessly connect with the coming XpressWest Las Vegas to Victor Valley project. This will ultimately provide a one-seat, high-speed, rail ride from Palmdale to Las Vegas.

###