

February 15, 2006

Santa Monica, California

## **INFORMATION ITEM**

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Stephanie Negriff, Director of Transit Services

SUBJECT: Community Transit Improvements Provided by Big Blue Bus and Santa Monica Dial-a-Ride

### Introduction

Santa Monica College Spring Semester began Monday, February 13, 2006. Historically, passenger volumes on routes serving SMC increase substantially during the first three weeks of spring and fall semesters. Big Blue Bus has implemented additional service on Pico Boulevard to coincide with the beginning of classes.

Another new service is being demonstrated by Santa Monica Dial-a-Ride (formerly WISE Paratransit). This program will offer members of the City's senior and disabled communities who are registered users of Dial-a-Ride a package excursion to Huntington Gardens on Saturday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

### Background

Pico Boulevard is the most heavily used transit corridor in the Big Blue Bus (BBB) system. Line 7 local and limited-stop (Super 7) services carry 22 percent of all BBB passengers.

Santa Monica College (SMC) is the most popular destination on the entire Pico corridor. Over 2,000 SMC students ride Big Blue Bus every day to the main campus during spring and fall semesters. In the morning during this period, westbound Line 7 and Super 7 buses often have standing loads by the time they enter Santa Monica and sometimes cannot stop to board additional passengers. Periodic overcrowding on the Pico corridor services is an issue that requires an immediate response.

### Discussion

On Monday, February 13, 2006, the Pico Neighborhood service began operating Monday through Friday between 7:20 a.m. and 9:50 a.m. Buses make all stops on Pico from 33<sup>rd</sup> Street to 4<sup>th</sup> Street, before making a final drop-off on 4<sup>th</sup> Street at the Civic Center. Service operates westbound only, which is the primary direction that passengers are traveling in the morning. Transit personnel are stationed along the Pico corridor to make service adjustments, as necessary. It is anticipated that this service will operate for the next several weeks until passenger volumes resume normal levels.

The Dial-a-Ride subscribers' excursion to the Huntington will depart from the Ken Edwards Center at 9:15 a.m. and return at approximately 2:30 p.m. Advance purchase tickets are \$3.00 for payments received by March 23<sup>rd</sup>. The price includes transportation on luxury coaches provided by Big Blue Bus and the entry ticket to the Huntington and the Gainsborough "Sensation and Sensibility" exhibit. WISE Senior Services is promoting the service.

## Summary

Implementation of this community transit service in the Pico Neighborhood will ensure that Santa Monica residents along Pico Boulevard will be provided with adequate transit service when passenger loads surge during SMC spring and fall semesters. The excursion to the Huntington Gardens and Gainsborough exhibit is expected to encourage more residents to register for the City's Dial-a-Ride service while providing an educational and recreational benefit.

Prepared by:           Stephanie Negriff, Director of Transit Services  
                              Paul Casey, Senior Transit Programs Analyst  
                              Big Blue Bus