



City of Houston Media Release Office of Mayor Annise Parker

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Mayor Annise Parker Names Five New METRO Appointees/Releases METRO Transition Team Reports

Mayor Parker has selected five new city appointees for the METRO Board of Directors. They are: Gilbert Garcia, Managing Partner, Davis Hamilton Jackson and Associates; Dwight Jefferson, Attorney at Law; Carrin Patman, Attorney Bracewell & Guiliani; Allen Dale Watson, Professional Engineer, CobbFendley; and Christof Spieler, Professional Engineer, Morris Architects. "This is a diverse group of very talented and respected Houstonians," said Mayor Parker. "They can provide the leadership, transparency and accountability needed as we move to restore public trust in METRO. This is a very critical time with difficult decisions ahead. I know this is the right group for the job."

The mayor's announcement follows a three-day trip to Washington during which she reiterated her strong support for the next phase of light rail. It also comes just days after her METRO Transition Task Force presented its findings to her. Five different subcommittees reviewed METRO's finances, light rail plans, regional coordination, basic services and small business enterprise program. "Although each subcommittee conducted its work independently, common themes emerged that confirm the need for new management at METRO," said Parker. "There are questions about the design and cost of rail expansion, communication issues, stakeholder frustration and a glaring need for a regional approach to mass transit. We know there will be sufficient funding to build three new rail lines. However, hurdles remain for funding a five line system. I am committed to five lines, but we may need to proceed in phases."

The Obama Administration's budget proposal currently includes \$900 million in federal funding for the North and Southeast Light Rail Lines. The East End Line, the only line already under construction, and the Uptown Line are to be funded locally. The University Line will also require federal funding. The current best guess estimate of when that funding might be approved is 2014.

Mayor Parker's recommended appointees are expected to be presented to City Council for confirmation April 7, in time for them to attend METRO's April board meeting.

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