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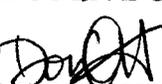
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February 18, 2005

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FROM: ROGER SNOBLE 
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

THROUGH: DON OTT 
EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF ADMINISTRATION

SUBJECT: PRESERVATION OF CONSTRUCTION PHOTOGRAPHS

ISSUE

In November 2004, the Executive Management and Audit Committee discussed and approved changes to the Records Retention Schedule that included a reduction to the retention schedule for the rail system's pre-construction and project progress photographs, from 100 years to 15 years, post project completion. Some concerns were raised that such photographs have historical value and local cultural institutions and universities should be contacted prior to disposing of any project photographs.

As a result, the Committee directed staff to contact local institutions such as the Huntington Museum, UCLA or USC prior to disposing of any construction photographs to encourage their preservation as historical artifacts.

DISCUSSION

Staff from Records Management, the Library/Archives and County Counsel met to discuss the issues. Concerns were raised over potential compromises to transportation system security if construction progress photographs and other documents were handed over in total to another entity.

Our library administrator also raised concern that donating all construction progress photographs as they are currently stored by Records Management would likely result in them being sent into storage and not seen again for many years to come. They could also be used to level criticism at the agency without the addition of context or basic interpretation.

Staff believes there is merit to having a measure of control over the display of artifacts related to transportation's past, present and future for the safety of the agency's transit system and public image. Creating coherent, concise and catalogued collections of significant photographs, which have been inspected for security issues, will make them

more attractive to, and secure for, a university, museum or other cultural institution to hold and display.

Construction related photographs will be reviewed by our Transportation Library/Archives staff prior to any destruction of them. Significant images that are not security sensitive will be digitized, catalogued, and held in-house for future access by historians, academics, the media industry and the public. The Library's current archive collections span 130 years of transportation history in Los Angeles. The library as a whole constitutes the nation's fourth largest transportation collection. The library is also a member and active participant in the *L.A. As Subject* database project administered by USC and the Getty Research Institute. Any photograph collections that other institutions want to acquire from us and that are not security sensitive will be shared, and any that cannot be held by the Library due to space or fiscal constraints will be offered to local universities, museums and cultural institutions such as the Getty Research Institute and the Huntington Museum.

NEXT STEPS

The Metro Blue Line construction photographs are the first set available for inspection under the new records retention schedule. Metro Library/Archives staff will work with Records Management to review and select significant images for preservation and cataloging.