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MAY 26, 2016

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

THROUGH: PHILLIP A. WASHINGTON *PAW*
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

FROM: THERESE W. McMILLAN *TMc*
CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER

**SUBJECT: VERMONT AND NORTH HOLLYWOOD TO PASADENA BUS
RAPID TRANSIT CORRIDORS**

ISSUE

At the July 24, 2014 meeting, the Board approved a motion (Attachment A) directing staff to begin advanced technical work on the Vermont and North Hollywood to Pasadena corridors as a result of recommendations from the Los Angeles County BRT and Street Design Improvement Study (CBRT). This was further supported through a subsequent motion approved by the Board at the October 23, 2014 meeting (Attachment B). This report updates the Board on the advanced technical work for the two corridors and the outreach efforts conducted to date.

BACKGROUND OR DISCUSSION

Background

In December 2013, staff completed the Los Angeles County BRT and Street Design Improvement Study. Staff presented the study's findings to the February 2014 Planning and Programming Committee, which identified Vermont and North Hollywood to Pasadena as two of nine potential BRT candidate corridors.

Vermont

Since the last quarterly update in February 2016, the project team has continued to make significant progress. The project team completed data collection for traffic counts and parking utilization, initiated preliminary model runs to determine ridership potential for both curbside and median running BRT, began preliminary environmental assessment

and conceptual engineering for the two BRT options.

The consultant is currently developing preliminary BRT concepts for each of the corridor segments, which have varying right-of-way widths. This evaluation will culminate in a BRT concept plan that tailors BRT running way and other elements, such as stations and/or platforms, to the physical characteristics and/or constraints along the corridor.

Based on the criteria used in the CBRT and other transit agencies, guidelines established by FTA, and recommendations from applicable literature, a set of both quantitative and qualitative criteria will be utilized to guide and evaluate the development of any final BRT concept and/or alternatives for the corridor. These criteria include: existing ridership/ridership potential, environmental benefits, cost effectiveness, travel time improvements, physical roadway available, congestion relief, integration into the built environment, and person throughput.

North Hollywood to Pasadena

In February 2016, the project team conducted an initial model run to establish baseline benchmarks. Potential BRT conceptual alignments were compared against these benchmarks for ridership potential and how well each served major activity centers and population and employment densities along the corridor. As a result of this analysis and in-depth discussions with the project Technical Advisory Committee, 10 initial alternative BRT concepts were reduced to four. The project team met with key staff with the Cities of Burbank, Glendale, and Pasadena to discuss desired corridors and stop locations. Their recommendations will be taken into consideration as the alternative concepts are further refined.

The Contractor will be conducting ridership model runs for each of the four BRT conceptual alignments to estimate ridership potential and compare concepts against performance criteria. The performance criteria being used for the North Hollywood to Pasadena corridor are the same as those being used for Vermont with one addition, regional network connectivity.

In March 2016, Metro opened new Pilot Express Bus Line 501 from the North Hollywood Red/Orange Line Station to the Metro Gold Line Del Mar Station in Pasadena. Staff has been using data from this Pilot to help inform the concepts being developed for this corridor and will continue to identify lessons learned and incorporate relevant data into this study effort.

Outreach Efforts

In February 2016, staff reported that stakeholder roundtables were held in each corridor in January 2016. Invitees included businesses, religious institutions, schools, hospitals, community/ neighborhood groups, major cultural centers, neighborhood councils, and Chambers of Commerce. The roundtables provided a valuable opportunity to receive feedback that helped inform concept alternatives development.

In response to a request by Board member Jacquelyn Dupont-Walker that additional key targeted stakeholders along the Vermont corridor be included, a third stakeholder roundtable was held on May 11, 2016. Invitees for this roundtable included those who were unable to attend one of the first two meetings as well as additional church and community groups. Outreach will continue throughout both studies. Staff has also reached out and offered individual project briefings to all affected City of Los Angeles Council Districts along Vermont. To date, we have met with staff from Councilmembers David E. Ryu (District 4), Marqueece Harris-Dawson (District 8), and Herb J. Wesson, Jr. (District 10), to provide an update on study progress. All agree that Vermont is an important transit corridor that needs improving. Council District 8 staff requested that rail also be studied as a potential mode for the corridor. Briefings will be scheduled for City of Los Angeles Council Districts along the North Hollywood to Pasadena corridor. In July 2016, staff is scheduled to brief the Arroyo Verdugo Cities Subregion, which includes the Cities of Burbank, Glendale and Pasadena on this study.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will continue advancing work on the technical studies for both the Vermont and North Hollywood to Pasadena corridor studies. The progress of both studies is on schedule with the results anticipated to be brought to the Board in Fall 2016. Staff will also continue to coordinate on lessons learned from the Line 501 Pilot service.

Attachment A – July 24, 2014 Board Motion
Attachment B – October 23, 2014 Board Motion

**MOTION BY DIRECTORS MICHAEL ANTONOVICH,
ARA NAJARIAN, MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS AND ERIC GARCETTI**

July 24, 2014

After several years of evaluation, MTA staff developed a list of eligible corridors for additional bus rapid transit (BRT) projects based on, among other things, ridership potential and net savings of operations funding. Two of the corridors hit upon unmet transit needs, which would greatly relieve congestion and link major transit centers.

The first corridor, Vermont Avenue, has long been recognized as one of the most congested streets in Los Angeles. According to MTA statistics, the Vermont Avenue corridor has among the most daily bus boardings in all of LA County. The bus system is unable to accommodate commuter demands without service improvements.

The second corridor between the North Hollywood Red/Orange Lines and the Pasadena Gold Line, by all accounts, has huge ridership potential and would connect the San Fernando and San Gabriel Valleys. Metro, in collaboration with Bob Hope Airport, is providing an important plane-to-train connection through improvements to the Metrolink Antelope Valley and Ventura County Lines. The Airport recently opened its Regional Intermodal Transit Center that provides seamless connectivity from trains to buses to planes. An additional connection through enhanced BRT is warranted to increase mobility.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the CEO direct staff to advance these projects and provide the Board with a report back in September on an implementation plan to include:

- A. Operations requirements**
- B. Funding requirements**
- C. Implementation timelines**

I FURTHER MOVE that the CEO:

- A. Immediately initiate the hiring process for the Bus Rapid Transit planning position included in the Board-approved MTA Fiscal Year 2014-15 budget**
- B. Dedicate additional staff to the aforementioned projects and the Countywide BRT Study as needed**

MOTION BY DIRECTORS ARA NAJARIAN, GARCETTI AND ANTONOVICH

Construction Committee

October 16, 2014

At the July 24, 2014 board meeting, the MTA board approved moving both the Vermont Avenue BRT and the North Hollywood to Pasadena BRT to the environmental phase in preparation and anticipation of future funding. Board Chair, Mayor Garcetti, amended the motion to direct that both BRT's should be MTA's top priority for federal small starts funds.

At the board staff briefing this week, MTA staff stated that a consultant was being procured only for the Vermont Avenue BRT, in direct contrast to the board's direction that both BRT projects move forward in tandem to be positioned for small starts funding. To support this motion,

WE THEREFORE MOVE that the consultant procurement for BRT advancement be amended to include the North Hollywood to Pasadena BRT.