Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952

213.922.2000 Tel
metro.net

Metro

SEPTEMBER 27, 2017

TO: **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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

FROM: **THERESE MCMILLAN**
CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER

SUBJECT: **METRO ORANGE LINE**
BUS RAPID TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS

ISSUE

Staff has completed work on the Metro Orange Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Improvements Technical Study and will bring this report to the Board for approval of recommended actions at its October 2017 meeting. This report provides a summary preview of those recommendations.

BACKGROUND

Measure M identified this project as "Orange Line BRT Improvements" with a groundbreaking date of FY2019 and an opening date of FY2025. Footnote "n" in the ordinance states "Critical grade separation(s) will be implemented early through Operation Shovel Ready."

The study was initiated in September 2016 to evaluate various improvements, including grade separations at key intersections and railroad-type gating to enhance bus service speed, safety, reliability and ridership.

The Metro Orange Line provides a vital high-capacity transit link through the San Fernando Valley that extends nearly 18 miles from the North Hollywood Metro Red Line station to the Chatsworth Metrolink Station, with a spur to Warner Center. It is a highly successful transit line in Metro's network, with approximately 25,000 daily riders. Attachment A contains the Study Area Map.

DISCUSSION

The gating system accomplished the highest benefit for the least cost relative to the other improvements. It would allow buses to travel faster than the current average of 21 miles per hour through roadway intersections while also improving safety by lowering the risk of vehicle intrusions into the busway. It also achieves superior and significant travel time savings of approximately 16 minutes each direction between North Hollywood and Chatsworth Stations, exclusive of station dwell times, without substantially changing average cross vehicular traffic travel times. Grade separations of major arterial roadways did not achieve the cumulative benefits in time savings because the stations located at these intersections required buses to stop anyway and with over 30 intersections, the limited number of grade separations cannot yield a significant, accumulated time savings. Otherwise, a grade separation structure by itself does provide a safety improvement.

The recommended project for further study in the environmental clearance and public engagement phase includes:

- A new single grade separation structure that would span from Van Nuys to Sepulveda Boulevards. The new structure would also span three intersecting streets in between. Existing BRT stations would be relocated vertically to the new structure. It also accommodates a separation from other planned, intersecting transit corridors.
- Other intersections along the busway between North Hollywood and Chatsworth stations are recommended to receive four quadrant safety gates of the type used for LRT.
- The Class I bike path adjacent to the span of the busway grade separation structure would, at a minimum, be grade separated at Van Nuys and Sepulveda Boulevards.
- The existing Class I bike path and signalization at roadway intersections would be retained.

Other operational improvements to MOL may be implemented, which do not involve significant capital improvements.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will return to the Board in October to provide a full report on the findings and recommendations of this study. Following the Board's action, staff would initiate the public and stakeholder engagement process, initiate the environmental review process, along with conducting engineering design to advance the project and remain on schedule.

ATTACHMENT

Attachment A –Study Area Map

ATACHMENT A: STUDY AREA MAP