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TO: **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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

FROM: **THERESE W. MCMILLAN**
CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER *TM*

SUBJECT: **CRENSHAW/LAX NORTHERN EXTENSION**
TRANSIT CORRIDOR STUDY UPDATE

ISSUE

A Feasibility Study/Alternatives Analysis is currently being prepared for the Crenshaw/LAX Northern Extension Corridor. Initial alternatives have been identified (Attachment A) and the study is conducting limited outreach to elected officials and stakeholders in the study area cities of Los Angeles and West Hollywood. This report provides an update on the study scope and direction to date. Staff will present the initial Feasibility Study/Alternatives Analysis Report findings to the Board in the spring following completion of the study and the current outreach efforts.

BACKGROUND

A northern extension of the Crenshaw/LAX Line was first identified as a part of planning studies for the Crenshaw/LAX project in 2009. Studies at the time considered an extension to the Metro Purple Line on Wilshire Boulevard, and ultimately farther north to Hollywood via West Hollywood. Funding for the extension was not identified at the time and therefore further studies of the extension were deferred.

In February 2016, the Board approved inclusion of the northern extension in the "Operation Shovel Ready" list of projects to be advanced for further study in order to take advantage of potential future opportunities that could advance those projects into construction at the earliest possible date. In 2016, Metro committed to project development steps to support making the project "shovel ready", including the completion of an Alternatives Analysis Study in mid-2018, followed by initiation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on the preferred alternative(s).

The current Crenshaw Northern Extension Feasibility/Alternatives Analysis Study was initiated in May 2016 and following the passage of the Measure M ballot measure in

November 2016, was further expanded to include Alternatives Analysis. In addition to the alternatives carried forward from 2009, one additional alternative was included in the recent study that considers a connection from the Expo/Crenshaw Station to the Wilshire/Vermont Station. This has resulted in a total of five alternatives being included in the present study that would provide a north-south regional transit link through heavily congested Central Los Angeles, connecting the South Bay, South LA, Mid-City, West Hollywood and Hollywood areas including major activity centers and areas of high population and employment density.

DISCUSSION

The Study Area currently experiences high transit demand and ridership throughout the day, with seven of the ten highest ridership bus routes in the County traversing the area. This bus service is hindered by traffic congestion throughout the day, with peak period speeds below 9 mph along the Study Area's major arterial streets.

Project funding included in Measure M includes a total of \$2.24 billion with a groundbreaking date of FY2041. Study alternatives range in length between 6.5 miles for the La Brea Alternative, 8.1 miles for the Fairfax Alternative, 9.2 miles for the La Cienega Alternative and 9.5 miles for the San Vicente Alternative, all of which would connect through West Hollywood and terminate at the Metro Red Line Hollywood/HIGHLAND Station. The Vermont Alternative is the shortest at 4.8 miles but would only extend north as far as the Wilshire/Vermont Station, where riders would need to transfer to the Metro Red Line in order to reach the northern terminus of the study corridor in Hollywood. This alignment would not connect through West Hollywood.

In order to maximize cost-effectiveness and cognizant of funding limitations, the study is identifying and evaluating opportunities for above-grade and at-grade profiles wherever possible, based on existing and planned physical conditions including roadway width, traffic volumes, land use and engineering feasibility. All five corridors demonstrate high ridership potential, particularly at major connection points with the Metro Rail system. The capital cost of each alternative is largely a function of its vertical profile, length and number of stations. Because of the various contexts of the existing built environment in which the alignments traverse, a key factor will be input from affected local jurisdictions and communities as to whether there is interest in re-imagining portions of the selected corridor.

NEXT STEPS

To date, the Crenshaw Northern Extension Study has focused on outreach with Planning and Transportation Departments in the Cities of Los Angeles and West Hollywood. Briefings have also been held with interested Board Staff and City elected officials. No general public outreach has yet been conducted.

The study will now expand outreach efforts to meet with project area stakeholders and additional elected offices before compiling and bringing the initial study findings and outreach results back to the Board in mid-2018. Following that would be a formal public engagement process, followed by potential screening back of the alternatives and then initiation of the environmental review process.

ATTACHMENT

Attachment A – Crenshaw/LAX Northern Extension Alternatives

Crenshaw/LAX Northern Extension:

Study Alignment Alternatives

A1 - San Vicente

A2 - La Cienega

B - Fairfax

C - La Brea

D - Vermont

