



Metro™

AUGUST 10, 2007

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS
THROUGH: ROGER SNOBLE *Carolyn Glance*
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
FROM: CAROL INGE *CI*
CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER
SUBJECT: FY '09 VERY SMALL STARTS PROPOSALS

ISSUE

One of the new discretionary grant programs created through the passage of the federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA-LU) is the Small Starts program. This program provides funding on a competitive basis for small public transportation capital projects that run along dedicated corridors or fixed guideways. One component of this program of particular interest to Metro is the Very Small Starts program.

This is to advise the Board that staff proposes to submit up to three project proposals to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for their consideration in the FY '09 funding cycle for the Very Small Starts Program. Project applications are due to FTA by September 7, 2007.

DISCUSSION

SAFETEA-LU (Section 5309(e)) created the Small Starts program to fund various small-scale transit corridor projects. One component of the Small Starts Program, known as the Very Small Starts program, encourages the implementation of small, low-risk bus or rail projects that meet certain criteria. In particular, this category encourages projects that are less than \$50 million in total cost and less than \$3 million per mile. Bus Rapid Transit projects generally are highly competitive in this category.

As you may be aware, Metro submitted three Very Small Starts projects to FTA for consideration last year as part of FTA's FY '08 funding cycle. The three projects were: 1) the Metro Rapid System Gap Closure Project, 2) the Van Nuys Metro Rapid Corridor Improvement Project, and 3) the Sepulveda Metro Rapid Corridor Improvement Project. Of these three projects, the Metro Rapid System Gap Closure

Project was provided approximately \$16.7 million in the FY '08 Budget released by the President earlier this year. This project is to complete the implementation of the Metro Rapid system adopted by the Board through the Metro Rapid Five Year Plan and the Long Range Transportation Plan. The other two projects, also identified in the Long Range Transportation Plan were not awarded funding.

FTA has recently published a Federal Register announcement notifying transit operators that the deadline for submitting Very Small Starts applications for FY '09 funding is September 7, 2007. Staff has reviewed program requirements and plans to submit up to three projects for FTA consideration, including the submittal of a Wilshire Bus Only Lane project, and the re-submittal of the Van Nuys and Sepulveda Metro Rapid Corridor projects. Submittal of these projects is subject to concurrence by the City of Los Angeles since all three projects involve operational improvements to City controlled arterials. All three projects are included in the 2001 Long Range Transportation Plan and best meet the eligibility criteria and time frame of the Very Small Starts Program.

Wilshire Boulevard Bus Only Lane Project

Construct various improvements along nine miles of Wilshire Boulevard within the City of Los Angeles between Valencia Street and the Santa Monica city limit, to provide for the implementation of peak hour bus only lanes. This project includes asphalt reconstruction of the curb lane between Fairfax and Western; traffic restriping, transit signal priority, and signage necessary to implement a dedicated peak hour bus lane along the entire nine mile project limit; and limited lane widening and curb alignment to enhance the flow of buses at several locations. The total cost of this project is estimated at \$27 million. Future funding as outlined in the 2001 Long Range Transportation Plan would remain in place for upgrading the reconstruction between Fairfax and Western from asphalt to concrete in the future.

Van Nuys Corridor Bus Speed Improvement Project

Construct a series of bus speed improvements along Van Nuys Boulevard between Ventura and Foothill, designed to increase bus travel speeds, and thereby increase the attractiveness of the service. Improvements include the construction of one half-mile bus lane segment, an intersection queue jumper, lane restriping, bus signal priority improvements, Ventura -101- Freeway/Van Nuys Boulevard Interchange improvements, and a bridge widening. The total cost of this project was estimated at \$8 million in Metro's 2006 application. City of Los Angeles staff has estimated that the cost should be escalated to \$9.75 million.

Sepulveda Metro Rapid Corridor Bus Speed Improvement Project

Construct a series of bus speed improvements along Sepulveda Boulevard between Ventura and Brand, designed to increase travel speeds, and thereby increase the attractiveness of the service. Improvements include construction of seven miles of bus lanes, lane restriping, and peak period parking restrictions. The total cost of this

project was estimated at \$37 million in Metro's 2006 application. City of Los Angeles staff has estimated that the cost should be escalated to \$41 million.

NEXT STEPS

Given that the Board does not have a regularly scheduled meeting in August, staff will provide an update to the Board on the status of Metro's grant applications at the September Board meeting. Staff will work with FTA to make any revisions to grant applications through the month of September. Metro Government Relations staff will work to seek FTA approval of proposed projects and to secure an appropriation for any FTA recommended projects in the FY '09 Transportation appropriations bill.

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