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Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

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DECEMBER 8, 2014

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

THROUGH: ARTHUR T. LEAHY *AL*
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

FROM: MARTHA WELBORNE, FAIA *MW*
CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER

SUBJECT: HARBOR GATEWAY TRANSIT CENTER

At its June 2014 meeting the Board passed a motion by Director Mark Ridley-Thomas directing the Chief Executive Officer to convene a roundtable of real estate and development professionals to seek their input on viable strategies for development of the Harbor Gateway Transit Center.

DISCUSSION

Site Description

The Harbor Gateway Transit Center ("Site") is the southernmost terminal of the Metro Silver Line, a bus rapid service that begins at the El Monte Transit Center in the City of El Monte, continues on to Interstate-10, passing through the Patsaouras Bus Plaza at Union Station and then turns south into the Harbor Freeway (I-110) to its terminus (Attachment A). Located in an approximately 15.60-acre parking lot owned by Caltrans, the Site provides 928 parking spaces and 14 bus bays. Parking occupancy at this location increased from 44% in 2011 to 71 % in 2014. The bus bays are used by Metro lines 51, 130, 205, 246, 344, and 450, Gardena Transit lines 2 and 4, and Torrance Transit lines 1, 4 and 6.

The Site is bounded by the Gardena Freeway (R-91) on the north, 182nd Street on the south, the Harbor Freeway on the east and the Dominguez Channel on the west. The bus hub is located at the southernmost portion of the Site. Power lines run across the northern portion of the Site. Access to the Site is constrained by freeways to the north and east and by the Dominguez Channel to the west. An internal roadway on the northern portion of the property connects it to S. Vermont Avenue while a single entrance located southeast of the Site connects it to 182nd Street. Both access points provide vehicular ingress and egress. Attachment B depicts the Site, its boundaries and adjacent uses.

Surrounding Area

The Site is surrounded by commercial and light industrial uses and is only a block or two away from residential neighborhoods to the north and west, all within the City of Gardena. The Gardena-Carson YMCA and the Gardena High School are located west of the Site while Home Depot is located just south. The City of Carson is located a few blocks off the predominantly light industrial north-south strip east of the Harbor Freeway.

Summary of Joint Development Potential Uses

Four development/real estate companies accepted Metro's invitation to participate in a meeting and a site visit to conduct a preliminary assessment of potential joint development opportunities at the Transit Center. These include Watson Land Company, Thomas Safron and Associates, Related Companies and Majestic Realty.

The following summarizes the preliminary assessment of development opportunities at the Site from the four participating development and real estate company representatives:

1. Potential development could include a predominantly residential use along 182nd Street with replacement parking at the rear portion of the Site. Residential development would likely be apartments should the property be offered under a long-term lease arrangement. Retail use would be limited and primarily serve transit users and residents on Site and thus would not be a primary economic driver. Numerous retail centers providing adequate goods and services are located within the adjacent neighborhoods. In addition, attracting retail demand from outlying areas would be difficult due to constrained access from the 110/91 freeways to the Site.
2. The Dominguez Channel can be an asset to any future potential development if the Site can be extended to include the Los Angeles County-owned parcels which are adjacent to the channel.
3. Significant subsidy is required to develop the Site, as consolidated parking replacement costs would far exceed the value of the land. Funding for affordable housing may be difficult to obtain as the Site is located within 500 feet from the freeway and Los Angeles County does not provide affordable housing subsidies to properties within 500 feet of a freeway.

In addition to this assessment, it is critical to note that Caltrans is the current owner of the Site. While Metro is in discussions with Caltrans about the transfer of ownership of this and other Caltrans park-and-ride lots to Metro, at this time it is not clear if Metro will take possession of the property in the future.

NEXT STEPS

Pursuing potential joint development at the Site is not possible at this time primarily due to the fact that Caltrans is the current owner of the Site. Also, the underlying land value would not support consolidating the park-and-ride facility into a multi-level garage. While joint development is not currently indicated, Metro Facilities staff has planned and begun a series of physical improvements to the Site to enhance passenger experience and safety, and facilitate convenient transfers among service providers.

Completed improvements to the Site include new art installations, landscaping, a transit passenger information system, public toilets, closed circuit television units, lighting upgrades at the station and the parking lot, and new signage and wayfinding. The second phase of improvements, including lighting, bus and platform drop-off improvements, structural signage and wayfinding (installation of pylons is awaiting permit from Caltrans) is scheduled for completion in April 2015.

In addition to these projects underway, Metro's Active Transportation staff will explore improvements that could be added to the Site to develop the Transit Center into a multi-modal transportation hub.



Legend:

- 1. Transit Center, Caltrans Property
- 2. State of California Property
- 3. Los Angeles County Property



Source: Landvision Version 8.37