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TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FROM: THOMAS CONNER *Thomas Conner*
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SUBJECT: STATUS REPORT ON PARKING AT VALLEY RED LINE STATIONS

ISSUE

This report responds to a request from Director Bernson concerning the MTA's activities to control parking at Universal City Station and to clarify the parking policy at the Hollywood-Vine Station. In addition, this report provides a comprehensive update of the overall parking conditions at the Valley Metro Red Line Stations.

BACKGROUND

Last June, the MTA implemented the final extension of the Metro Red Line from the Hollywood area to the San Fernando Valley. Since the rail extension was implemented, the anticipated rider demand from the Valley has outpaced projections and strained available resources, particularly parking capacity at Universal City and North Hollywood Stations.

The parking problem was discussed at length with the Board last fall. Staff was directed to implement a series of management actions to ease the identified parking problems. Summarized below are the primary objectives intended to address these issues, including actions that have been implemented to date and those currently underway or pending. For purposes of review the objectives include:

- Increase Parking Capacity at Valley Metro Red Line Stations
- Implement Taxi Stands
- Expand Bicycle Parking
- Monitor & Enforce Regulations
- Develop System-wide Parking Policy
- Response to Director Bernson

INCREASE PARKING CAPACITY AT VALLEY STATIONS

Action Taken:

Between October 2000 and February 2001, staff increased automobile parking capacity at North Hollywood and Universal City Stations by 30% and 25%, respectively. These improvements were accomplished by re-stripping the existing lots and through the opening of new parking areas within the current lots. In addition, a new temporary parking lot was constructed at North Hollywood Station adjacent to the main parking facility.

In all, 251 additional parking spaces were created at North Hollywood Station over the past few months. Seventy-eight additional parking spaces were created at Universal Station during the same time frame. The total amount of parking capacity now available at North Hollywood Station stands at 1,101 spaces. At Universal City Station, the total number of parking spaces is 390.

Pending Action:

Parking capacity at Universal City Station will be increased by another 42% this summer when a new 165-car park-ride lot is expected to be completed. The new parking lot will be located adjacent to the main parking facility. At that time, the total number of parking spaces at this station will be increased from 390 to 555.

Staff is also pursuing potential joint development opportunities near North Hollywood Station to augment current parking capacity in that area. A Request For Proposal was issued last Fall by staff to interested developers. Bids are due May 7, 2001. Awards are tentatively scheduled to be announced in August of this year. Approximately 400 more parking spaces may be added through the joint development process, which would increase the total parking capacity at North Hollywood Station to roughly 1,500 cars.

Satellite parking sites are also being investigated as possible fallback options for future use. For example, staff has been working with Caltrans to lease a parcel of land near Universal City Station that was previously used as a temporary parking lot for the MTA contractor constructing the Hollywood Freeway Flyover. The Caltrans lot, located on Ventura Blvd. at Lankershim Blvd., can accommodate 75 cars, and is within walking distance of the station. Negotiations to lease this property from Caltrans are continuing. Discussions with the community are also underway to determine how long these 75 spaces can be retained as parking.

In addition, the potential use and promotion of several mid-valley parking sites, e.g. Balboa Park and Ride, are being researched for their potential to serve as feeder points for patrons who now drive to Universal City Station.

Finally, the Bus Rapid Transit Project for the East-West Corridor Study is expected to provide parking relief at North Hollywood Station when that project becomes operational. Over 3,000 additional parking spaces are planned to be built at station stops along the 14-mile busway corridor.

IMPLEMENT TAXI STANDS AT STATIONS

Action Taken:

Staff has met with LADOT staff and their parking contractors to assess the potential for the successful implementation and use of taxi stands at the two Valley stations. Both stations have capacity to accommodate taxi stands, albeit some capital improvements may be required to facilitate passenger safety and convenience. The City has submitted a funding request in the FY 2002 Call For Projects to pay for passenger benches, shelters, and communication equipment.

Pending Action:

Pending the successful award of the City's application, the required capital improvements could be made at these stations later this year. Upon award, staff will work closely with the city and their parking contractor to expedite and coordinate the implementation of these improvements as soon as possible.

EXPAND BICYCLE PARKING

Action Taken:

Between last November and January of this year, bicycle-parking capacity was increased at North Hollywood Station by 175%. In all, 28 additional bicycle parking spaces were established during that time.

Pending Action:

Later this month, staff is proposing to implement additional bicycle parking at both North Hollywood Station and at Universal City Station. Specifically, an additional 32 bicycle parking spaces will be implemented at North Hollywood and 16 additional spaces are planned for Universal City station. Collectively, this represents another 73% increase in bicycle parking capacity at North Hollywood Station and a 114% increase in parking capacity at Universal City Station. The total number of bicycle parking spaces at North Hollywood will be 76 by the end of this month and the grand total of bicycle parking spaces at Universal will be 30.

MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT

Action Taken:

Staff has initiated and maintained an ongoing program of enforcement and monitoring of the parking conditions at North Hollywood and Universal City Stations since the rail startup. Although parking capacity at these stations has been improved significantly since last summer, demand for parking continues to strain resources at both facilities.

Permanent signage has been installed at each station informing users that parking is for MTA patrons only; all others are subject to having their automobiles towed at their expense. Warnings are periodically placed on the windshields of the cars parked in these lots reminding drivers of the parking restrictions. While this has helped hold down the number of potential violators, field investigations indicate that the current violation rate is somewhere between 10-15% at Universal City Station. North Hollywood Station, by contrast, has minimal problem with this activity primarily due to the absence of any major businesses in the area. While no cars have been towed to date, some citations have been issued to drivers who parked in un-designated parking areas.

Pending Action:

Staff will continue to monitor the parking lots and will gradually increase the level of enforcement starting with more windshield warnings, increased random checks of the lot by MTA Security and Police, and the towing of unauthorized vehicles, if necessary.

Staff is also planning to conduct a customer survey next month to obtain information from current parking patrons as to their level of knowledge of the bus lines that serve these stations. Information derived from the survey will be used to target market bus service in specific areas in the Valley in an attempt to promote resident awareness of the alternative travel opportunities to reach the rail stations. Should improvements in the current bus service be warranted, staff will attempt to correct those deficiencies by restructuring the schedules and/or routes of the affected bus lines. Alternative transportation providers such as smart shuttles and taxis will be included in the survey assessment.

DEVELOP SYSTEMWIDE PARKING POLICY

Action Taken:

Meetings have been held with several private firms that specialize in the parking industry to gain insight into the feasibility of implementing a pay system of parking at MTA-owned facilities. Although potentially feasible, there are a number of broader issues that need to be researched in the upcoming system-wide parking study before a final determination can be made.

Planning and Operations staff have jointly developed a draft Scope of Work for a consultant who will conduct a comprehensive parking study and assist in developing a system-wide parking

policy and management program. Staff anticipates the procurement process to begin this July and the study to commence in late September. The study will take several months to complete.

Pending Action:

Staff and the parking consultant will conduct MTA Management/Board workshops to solicit input on the parking policy and to identify potential points of agreement for the development of a parking policy framework

INFORMATION REQUEST FROM DIRECTOR BERNSON

Pay Parking at Universal Station

Director Bernson requested that staff research the possibility of hiring a private parking firm to manage the parking lot at Universal City Station and to establish a maximum price for non-Metro rail users.

Staff has met with several firms to discuss the feasibility of implementing a controlled-system of parking at both Valley rail stations. As noted in the previous section, there are a number of policy, management and operational issues that require further research in order to resolve the parking problem there and elsewhere in the system. Some of the many issues to be addressed in the upcoming parking study include the development of a uniform agency policy on parking; identification of appropriate control strategies that will not impede access and egress from the parking sites; verification and validation of various fare media; identification of effective enforcement strategies; and pricing considerations as these costs will not be reimbursed through added revenues. In the meantime, staff proposes to step up our current parking enforcement strategy to maintain order in the parking lots while aggressively pursuing a marketing plan to encourage discretionary drivers who now use these lots to switch to public transportation.

Parking Policy at Vine Station

Director Bernson noted that the Vine Station parking lot is owned by the MTA but is operated as general parking for either transit or local use. He questioned why the lot was not free for rail patrons.

During the development of the metro rail system, the underlying strategy was to provide parking mainly at rail terminals to discourage in-city driving and parking. Mid-line stations were not to have dedicated parking, but were slated to rely on pedestrian and bus access. Some stations have small kiss and ride lots to pick up and drop off passengers.

The Vine Street parking lot occupies surplus property that is currently the subject of a proposed joint development project. The lot is operated by a contractor who pays monthly lease revenues to the MTA. The lot is operated for profit and is open to the general public. Metro rail patrons may park there, however, their cost is not waived by the MTA or the parking operator. The lot

provides parking primarily for businesses in the Hollywood area. It is expected that this lot will be closed as the joint development project moves forward.

NEXT STEPS

Since the Metro Red Line was extended to the San Fernando Valley last summer, staff has implemented a number of corrective measures to increase automobile and bicycle parking capacity at the North Hollywood and Universal City Stations. Although capacity has been increased at both stations, demand for parking continues to escalate to the point where we are once again near saturation.

While on-going monitoring and increased enforcement measures are planned to help manage the current demand, other steps are proposed or under consideration to further help mitigate parking demand. These include: 1) further expansion of existing parking capacity at both stations; 2) the promotion of satellite parking areas in the mid-valley to reduce parking demand at the stations; 3) the possible implementation of a controlled system of parking at the stations; and 4) an aggressive marketing campaign aimed at educating current auto users about the MTA service that operates there, including services provided by other public and private carriers.