



Metro

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

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**AD HOC CONGESTION PRICING COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 18, 2009**

SUBJECT: LOS ANGELES COUNTY CONGESTION REDUCTION DEMONSTRATION PROJECT (LA CRD): EL MONTE BUSWAY IMPROVEMENTS AND TRANSIT CENTER EXPANSION PROJECT

ACTION: APPROVE LIFE OF PROJECT BUDGET AND AMEND THE FY09 BUDGET

RECOMMENDATION

- A. Establish a life-of-project (LOP) budget for the El Monte Busway Improvements and Transit Center Expansion Project, Capital Project #202286, in the amount of \$60,106,000;
- B. Cancel the Ramirez Flyover project approved through the Call for Projects (Project #4302) and program the \$2.0 million Call for Project Prop C25% funds to the El Monte Busway Improvements and Transit Center Expansion Project (CP# 202286); and
- C. Amend the FY09 budget to add in \$2,600,000 of revenues and expenditures.

RATIONALE

This action will set a Life of Project (LOP) budget for the El Monte Busway Improvements and Transit Center Expansion Project (CP 202286) in the amount of \$60,106,000, which will primarily provide for improvements to the Patsaouras Transit Plaza to provide an elevated El Monte Busway Station within the Union Station complex and construction of a new and expanded El Monte Transit Center in the City of El Monte.

The primary goal of the El Monte Busway projects is to increase capacity for passengers, commuter parking, and bus operations required to operate increased express bus service within the corridor, and to enhance the rider experience by providing an accessible, secure and monitored environment with "bus rapid transit" amenities similar to the Metro Orange Line. In addition, this project finally provides for an El Monte Busway station within the Union Station complex, eliminating a significant passenger inconvenience and potentially attracting additional rail and local bus riders to use the El Monte Busway.

Patron utilization of the El Monte Busway and the El Monte Transit Center has increased substantially within the last year, primarily due to higher gas prices in the summer and fall. While the additional ridership and facilities usage would typically be welcome news, the increased ridership has strained the related capital facilities that were already operating above capacity. For this reason, these improvement and expansion projects are required to support the addition of new and more frequent bus service along the El Monte Busway, planned for launch in December 2010 as a complementary transit enhancement.

At its September 2008 meeting, the Board of Directors approved the programming of \$290.6 million to implement projects under the Los Angeles Region Congestion Reduction Demonstration Initiative (LA CRD). The projects include transit improvements and the conversion of high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes on Interstate 10 and Interstate 110 to high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes. Funding for the September 2008 CRDP programming action was obtained from a \$210.6 million grant from the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), and \$80 million in State of California Proposition 1B Transit Modernization funding. Since this action, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have approved Southern California Association of Government's Amendment #1 to the 2008 Regional Transportation Plan and Amendment #08-01 to the 2008 Regional Transportation Improvement Plan. As such, the funds programmed for transit capital projects are now available to be used by Metro for implementation of the project. Projects funded as part of the LA CRD, such as the El Monte Busway Improvements and Transit Center Expansion Project, are required to be complete and operational by December 31, 2010.

As listed in Attachment A of the September 2008 programming report, several of our projects will be funded as part of the LA CRD, including, but not limited to, purchase of buses, improvements to the El Monte Busway at Patsaouras Plaza, construction of the Union Division, and improvements to the Harbor Transitway. In addition, the LA CRD also funds projects managed by other agencies, such as expansion of capacity and lane reconfigurations on I-10 and I-110 (Caltrans), Metrolink improvements, municipal agency bus purchases, and the City of Los Angeles Intelligent Parking Management Program.

Union/Patsaouras Plaza Busway Station

For some time, the entrance to the existing HOV lane at Union Station has been in need of reconfiguration to allow for the more efficient ingress and egress of pedestrians, buses and automobiles. Further, the passenger boarding/alighting areas are not located contiguous with Union Station, but rather are situated at the corner of Alameda and the busway entrance, which would require a ¼ mile walk to the Plaza. There is no direct pedestrian connection to Union Station, and there are no passenger amenities such as lighting, closed circuit television (CCTV), information displays, or landscaping. To resolve these issues and provide a more user-friendly passenger experience, a number of potential configurations have been evaluated. The preferred configuration is to relocate the existing passenger boarding/alighting areas on the south side of Patsaouras Plaza.

As currently envisioned, the scope of work for the Union/Patsaouras Busway Station will consist of the following elements: (1) relocation of the Busway patron boarding island (now

situated at the corner of Alameda) to the east side of Patsaouras Plaza to allow more efficient passenger boarding and alighting for buses running on the El Monte Busway; and (2) installation of related capital improvements to the El Monte Busway, Patsaouras Plaza, East Portal and Gateway Office Building to accommodate passenger boarding and alighting within an elevated median "BRT" type station with a direct pedestrian connection to Union Station.

In the 1997 Call for Projects, \$2.87 million in Proposition C 25% funds was programmed to the Ramirez Flyover project. The scope of the project was to improve El Monte Busway access to Patsouras Transit Plaza. Since that time there has not been consensus as to the necessary improvements and as a result, work was suspended. In 2006, the Board extended the original lapsing deadline on the Call for Projects grant to June 30, 2009 to provide an opportunity to define the project. Through the 2008 Call for Projects Recertification/Deobligation process, the Board authorized \$325,000 of the grant funds to be used to evaluate design options that could result in a change in scope. Based on staff analysis, the Ramirez Flyover project is no longer needed, and the new proposed project is a far superior betterment to the capacity and operation of the Transit Plaza and the LA CRD project. As such, we are recommending that the Ramirez Flyover project be cancelled and that the funds previously programmed be used to supplement the budget for this project. Operations, Planning and the Real Estate Departments have been consulted and all are in agreement that this project meets the intent of the original grant.

Provision of this station configuration will significantly enhance the smooth implementation of the LA CRD and complementary transit enhancements by allowing busway passengers direct pedestrian connections to both Union Station and Patsaouras Plaza. By saving over one-fourth mile pedestrian walking distance, mode shift to regional and local buses, heavy rail, light rail and commuter trains is encouraged. In addition, this new configuration will also improve the overall operational efficiency of Patsaouras Plaza by reducing a number of seemingly unnecessary short bus trips.

If this LOP budget request is approved, FY09 activities will include preparation of design concepts in consultation with inter and intra-agency stakeholders, environmental clearance in accordance with FTA and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) policy, and commencement of preliminary engineering. Although contingent on FTA approval of the NEPA clearance documents and scope of work, assuming timely approval, engineering and design activities will commence in March 2009 and a construction contract for the project will be awarded in late summer 2009. The goal will be to open the new station by December 31, 2010, in compliance with the FTA deadline for the LA CRD project.

El Monte Transit Center

The El Monte Transit Center is located near the intersection of Ramona and Santa Anita in El Monte, adjacent to our Division 9 bus operations and maintenance facility. The transit center is operated by us on land currently owned by Caltrans, with us having perpetual rights under a Memorandum of Understanding to operate the transit center and associated commuter lots. The transit center is used by our local and express buses, as well as Foothill Transit (Silver Streak) and Greyhound services. The El Monte Transit Center was

constructed in 1976 (33 years ago) with ten bus berths, but was temporarily expanded with six additional bus berths in 2005 by converting an underused surface lot for bus terminal operations. The facility is chronically undersized to accommodate even current ridership, even without the forecasted increase in ridership over the next several years due to the LA CRD and other factors.

The focus of this project is to build a new, modern, and expanded bus transit facility in El Monte, designed to serve as both an essential anchor to the LA CRD and as a demonstration of the current and future importance of bus rapid transit (BRT). Already one of the largest and busiest bus stations in the Western states, the El Monte Transit Center sees some 2,000 trips and over 24,000 passengers traveling through the Station on a weekday basis. Staff estimates, completed even before increases in gasoline prices, an increase in bus departures as well as passenger boarding of 50 percent over the next 20 years, necessitating an increase in bus berth requirements to at least 30. The effect of the LA CRD and associated transit enhancements is expected to accelerate that growth in half the time, perhaps as soon as five years from now.

A new and improved El Monte Transit Center is also a centerpiece to the proposed El Monte Transit Village, a project sponsored by the City of El Monte and their developer to construct a bus-centric transit-oriented development (TOD) on Metro-operated commuter lots surrounding the transit center as well as additional parcels already controlled by the City of El Monte. Entitlement of the El Monte Transit Village is ongoing; however, due to the LA CRD funds the El Monte Transit Center will get constructed first. For this reason, it is a primary focus of Metro and the City of El Monte that the design and construction of the new El Monte Transit Center be integrated with the El Monte Transit village, so that the project as a whole will be a seamless bus-oriented TOD.

In December 2008, we convened a community meeting in El Monte to discuss the possibility of a new transit center, and to engage the community in the design of the project. Following the community meeting, we called together a technical working group consisting of representatives from Metro, El Monte, the Developer, Caltrans, Foothill Transit, and Greyhound in an attempt to come to a consensus on a conceptual design for the El Monte Transit Center. At the end of these sessions, the group reached consensus on a conceptual design for the project, which with the LOP budget approval, will be advanced through environmental clearance, preliminary engineering, design, and construction.

As presently envisioned in the design concept, the structure has a minimum of one floor of underground parking for up to 500 additional commuter vehicles, and a two-level bus station above the parking. The bus station levels are split between an express bus level which will be used to operate the fare-paid express services (Metro Express, Silver Streak, potentially FlyAway), and a level for local service. The new transit center will be complete with all the modern amenities typical of a modern BRT transit environment, such as variable message signs, intercoms, CCTV, ticket vending machines, wayfinding equipment and information displays, elevators/escalators, operator restrooms, a transit store, and Sheriff's substation. The structure will match up structurally with other underground parking planned by the City of El Monte and the Developer, and enhances the ingress/egress and development schemes for the Transit Village. The structure will be designed and constructed to achieve

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification with a minimum rating of "Silver".

If this LOP budget request is approved, FY09 activities for this project component will include completion of the site conceptual design in collaboration with project stakeholders, environmental clearance in accordance with FTA and NEPA policy, community meetings, and completion of preliminary engineering. Although contingent on FTA approval of the NEPA clearance documents and scope of work, assuming timely approval, in late summer 2009 a design/build contract to complete the new station will be competitively bid and subsequently awarded. The goal will be to open the new station by December 31, 2010, in compliance with the FTA deadline for the LA CRD project.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Upon Board approval, funding of \$2,600,000 of Prop C25% and Catellus escrow funds required for FY09 activities will be added to FY09 budget in cost center #3340 and Project #202286. As shown on Attachment A, the source of funds for implementing the project in FY09 and future fiscal years will be \$38,900,000 in FTA Section 5307 funds and \$16,400,000 of Prop C40% local match programmed for the LA CRD, \$2.9 million in construction funds previously committed to the Ramirez Flyover by Catellus (now ProLogis), and the \$2 million in Call for Projects funding reprogrammed from the canceled Ramirez Flyover. Usage of the \$2.9 million in ProLogis funds is contingent on approval of Metro's escrow withdrawal by ProLogis. Since this is a multi-year project, the Project Manager and the Chief Operations Officer will be responsible for budgeting the costs in future years.

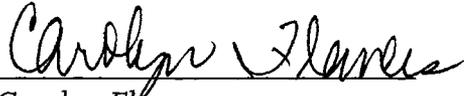
ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board of Directors may choose not to authorize the project at this time. This alternative is not recommended since staff would not be able to access or draw down the \$55.3 million in Federal 5307 funds and we would risk losing the \$210.6 million LA CRD funds. In addition, the projects must be completed by December 31, 2010, and we must start all environmental, engineering, and procurement work in order to deliver the project by this USDOT deadline.

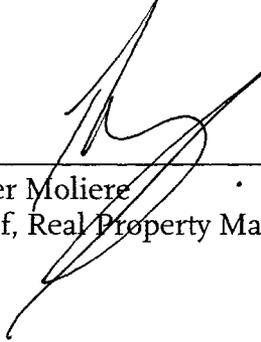
ATTACHMENTS

- A. El Monte Busway Improvements and Transit Center Expansion Project: Life of Project Budget Status

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Attachment A
CP 202286 El Monte Busway & Transit Center Improvements
Funding/Expenditure Plan

Dollars in (000's)	FY09 Incured to date	FY09 Forecast	FY10	FY11	FY12+	Total	%
Uses of Funds							
Project Adm/Construction Mgmt	0	200	1,850	1,750	300	4,100	6.80%
Design/Specs/Other Prof Svcs	0	2,200	4,250	950	250	7,650	12.70%
Environmental Clearance		200				200	0.33%
Construction/Equipment	0	0	16,400	28,000	750	45,150	75.17%
Contingency	0	0	1,490	1,330	186	3,006	5.00%
Total Project Cost	0	2,600	23,990	32,030	1,486	60,106	100%
Sources of Funds							
FTA Sec 5307 local match	0	0	17,352	21,548		38,900	64.7%
PC 40% from CRD			4338	10,482	1,486	16,306	27.1%
CFP #43001 Ramirez Flyover (PC25)		2,000	0	0	0	2,000	3.30%
Ramirez Flyover (Catellus Escrow)		600	2,300	0	0	2,900	4.80%
Total Project Funding	0	2,600	23,990	32,030	1,486	60,106	100%

