



**Metro**

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**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE  
JUNE 15, 2005**

**OPERATIONS COMMITTEE  
JUNE 16, 2005**

**SUBJECT: WILSHIRE BOULEVARD BUS SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS;  
EXPANSION OF PEAK-PERIOD TRANSIT LANES  
AND METRO RAPID SIGNAL PRIORITY**

**ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE**

**RECOMMENDATION**

Receive and file this report on the status of the Wilshire Boulevard Peak Period Bus Lanes in West Los Angeles and efforts to expand peak-period dedicated transit lanes and bus signal priority into adjacent jurisdictions.

**ISSUE**

In March 2004, peak period bus lanes were implemented as a 6-month demonstration project for a one-mile segment of Wilshire Boulevard in West Los Angeles between Centinela Avenue and Federal Avenue. These lanes were created primarily by restricting curbside metered parking during the peak periods (7:00 to 9:00 am and 4:00 to 7:00 pm) on weekdays and allowing transit buses to operate in the curb lane during these times. A short segment at the eastern end of the demonstration segment already had no curb parking at any time and required converting a mixed flow traffic lane to bus-only lane use during the peak periods.

In September 2004, the Los Angeles City Council approved the one-mile segment as a permanent improvement and directed the City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) to report back in about 6-months on the continued operation of the bus lane in the City of Los Angeles and efforts to extend the lane into adjacent jurisdictions. At that time, the MTA Board requested that staff try to extend the lanes. The CEO provided a Receive and

File Report to the Metro Board indicating that the most likely next steps would be to work with the County of Los Angeles to extend the lane eastward toward the San Diego (I-405) Freeway through the Veteran's Administration property and to work with the City of Santa Monica to implement bus signal priority and bus lanes in that city.

The bus lanes have been successful in reducing the travel time for transit riders in the one-mile initial segment. Average runtimes for transit buses have been reduced both in the AM (from 2-6 percent) as well as the PM (14 percent) peak-periods. Buses are now traveling at more consistent speeds that directly translate into improved travel time reliability of 13-16 percent in AM and 12-32 percent in PM peak-periods.

This report summarizes the ongoing efforts with each of the above jurisdictions to extend the peak-period bus lanes and bus-signal priority into jurisdictions adjacent to the City of Los Angeles.

## **DISCUSSION**

### Eastward Extension of Bus Lanes (County of Los Angeles and Caltrans)

Metro is currently working with the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works, in coordination with LADOT and Caltrans, to develop a program of improvements to extend an eastbound bus lane and other traffic improvements from the terminus of the existing peak-period bus lane project at Federal Avenue toward Veteran Avenue. Jurisdiction for improvements to Wilshire Boulevard in this one-mile segment resides with the County of Los Angeles and Caltrans (I-405 ramps). During periods of heavy traffic congestion, traffic queues originating at the I-405 freeway ramps extend westward often to the vicinity of Federal Avenue.

Improvements in this one-mile area are proposed to include an eastbound bus lane adjacent to the Veterans Administration property from Federal Avenue (eastern end of the current bus lanes) to the Bonsall Drive (VA Hospital) Metro Rapid Station. Implementation of the bus lane in this area will require minor redesign and reconstruction of the Wilshire median and segments of the southerly curbs.

Other improvements to mixed-flow traffic in the eastbound direction are also being evaluated in the vicinity of the San Diego Freeway ramps. A bus lane in the area of the freeway would not be possible without the widening of the mainline freeway structure over Wilshire Boulevard. Therefore, Metro Rapid improvements in this area are limited to mixed-flow traffic improvements that will speed the flow of all traffic. Metro and other transit buses would benefit from these mixed-flow improvements until such a time as improvements to the mainline freeway ramps and structures can be undertaken. The Metro FY06 budget has funding to conduct preliminary engineering on both the eastbound bus only lane and the mixed-flow traffic improvements near the San Diego Freeway.

### Westward Extension of Bus Lanes (City of Santa Monica)

At this time, the City of Santa Monica is not considering bus only lanes on Wilshire Boulevard, but instead is focusing on the expansion of bus signal priority in that city. Once bus signal priority has been implemented, the city would evaluate further improvements to transit service such as bus only lanes.

Beginning June 27, 2005, the City of Santa Monica will be implementing new Metro Rapid like service on Lincoln Boulevard from Downtown Santa Monica to Los Angeles International Airport and the Metro Green Line. That line will be operated by Santa Monica Big Blue Bus and will operate with features similar to Metro Rapid including signal priority. In addition, Metro Rapid service is planned for Santa Monica Boulevard, and the City of Santa Monica will be considering bus signal priority as a primary component of that project.

Initially, bus signal priority was only implemented within the City of Los Angeles segments of the Wilshire Metro Rapid line. In 2004, bus signal priority on Wilshire was expanded to East Los Angeles (County of Los Angeles) and in Summer 2005, bus signal priority will be expanded to the City of Beverly Hills.

### Ongoing Operation of the Peak-Period Bus Lanes in West Los Angeles

Continued operation of the existing bus priority lanes in West Los Angeles is at the discretion of the City of Los Angeles, and in this case, LADOT continues to have concerns about the impact on mixed-flow traffic that has been caused by the implementation of the peak-period transit lanes at the eastern end of the bus lanes between Westgate and Federal Avenues. This is the only segment that was converted from mixed-flow traffic to bus lane and right-turns only.

LADOT has advised Metro staff that they are preparing recommendations to City Council. Recommendations by LADOT may involve removal of the peak-period bus lanes in the two-block area between Federal and Barrington, or possibly, removal of the peak-period bus lanes and conversion to mixed-flow traffic operation over the one-mile length of the project. However, analysis prepared by Metro staff indicates that technical solutions should be possible to address the concerns of LADOT and maintain operation of the bus lanes in this area. Metro staff will continue to work with LADOT on technical analysis and potential mitigation measures to address their concerns.

### **NEXT STEPS**


Metro will monitor the LADOT recommendation to Los Angeles City Council regarding changes to the existing peak-period dedicated bus lane and report back to the Board. Additionally, staff will continue to work with the County of Los Angeles on an agreement to develop designs for the eastbound bus lane expansion into the VA Property and associated restriping and curb and median reconfigurations required to support that project. Metro staff will also work with Caltrans on an agreement to implement the freeway ramp

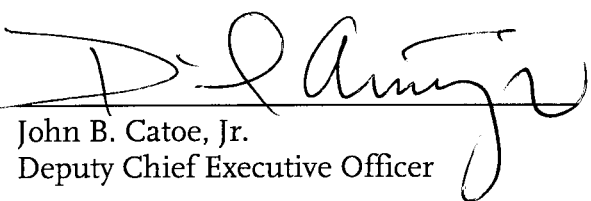
improvements at the I-405 Freeway, and with Beverly Hills and Santa Monica to implement bus signal priority on Wilshire Boulevard and other streets within their jurisdictions.

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