



Information Item

Date: August 7, 2009

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Eileen Fogarty, Director of Planning and Community Development
Subject: Metro Westside Subway Extension (Subway to the Sea) Project

Introduction

This report is to provide a brief update and background information on the Westside Subway Extension (“Subway to the Sea”) project proposed by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (“Metro”).

Background

On January 22, 2009, the Metro Board of Directors approved the Subway to the Sea Alternatives Analysis, and authorized preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIS/EIR) for two alignments. The EIS/EIR will analyze the Wilshire Boulevard alignment extending from the Purple Line at Wilshire/Western, and a Santa Monica Boulevard alignment extending from the Hollywood/Highland Red Line station. In addition, the Draft EIS/EIR will evaluate a “no-build” and a Transportation Systems Management (TSM) alternative. At the conclusion of the Draft EIS/EIR process—due out in the summer of 2010—Metro will recommend a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). The LPA will identify the project that will move forward into the Final EIS/EIR process. Elements to be considered prior to identification of the LPA are: defining the initial Wilshire Boulevard segment(s) as well as future segment(s); specifying station details; examining the cost effectiveness of various segments; and the timing and funding for the implementation plan. The following is Metro’s current EIS/EIR Study Schedule:

Public Participation in EIR/EIS Process	Dates
Public Scoping Meetings	April 2009
Scoping Public Comment Period Closed	May 7, 2009
Ongoing Community Update Meetings	Quarterly; upcoming: August 6, 2009
Public Hearings on Recommended Locally Preferred Alternative	Summer 2010 (anticipated)
Metro Board Adoption of Locally Preferred Alternative	Fall 2010 (anticipated)

The Subway to the Sea is programmed to interconnect with the transit bus system and the expanding network of light rail lines. The subway would connect from the current terminus of the Purple Line at Wilshire Boulevard and Western Avenue, and possibly from the Hollywood/Highland Red Line station to Santa Monica Boulevard in West Hollywood, with stations along the Wilshire Boulevard corridor in Beverly Hills, Century City, Westwood and UCLA, concluding in downtown Santa Monica.

Discussion

A Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the Westside Subway Extension was released in March 2009, and the draft EIS/EIR is currently being prepared. Staff was present at the well-attended NOP scoping meeting in Santa Monica in April 2009, and participated at a progress update briefing on July 28, 2009. Metro is currently considering up to three proposed stations in Santa Monica along the Wilshire Boulevard corridor. Although the project is not currently anticipated to reach Santa Monica until approximately 2030, staff views all requests for comment or input to Metro as opportunities for the City to promote consistency with Santa Monica’s long-term planning efforts, including the LUCE and various specific plans.

The City did not submit formal comments in response to the NOP; however, staff has informally discussed some issues of importance to Santa Monica, including:

- The need for stations to be consistent with the vision in the LUCE Strategy Framework.
- Connection with the Expo Light Rail line is critical and Metro should consider the possibility of co-locating station(s) with the Expo line terminus. In the absence of such a connection, consideration should be given to ways that the downtown transit mall can extend to serve and connect both stations
- Implications of end-of-the-line design on efficiency and effectiveness of transit in the Westside and as a regional transit hub. Efficient terminal and interim terminal stations should be located where these can be well served by bus links north through the Sepulveda Pass and south to the South Bay.
- Inclusion of elements that will encourage walking, cycling and transit access, rather than driving access, to terminal and interim terminal stations. Metro can ensure access by providing bus parking, bike transit centers, signal improvements, lanes, and striping.
- Consideration of differences in peak traffic data in Santa Monica as compared to the regional model.

Preliminary Station Siting

On July 13, an inter-departmental group of City staff, including representatives from Planning & Community Development, Housing & Economic Development, Redevelopment, Public Works and the Big Blue Bus, met with Metro's urban design sub-consultants, Torti Gallas, to provide Metro with local information about the City's planning efforts and review potential locations for subway stations along the Wilshire corridor. Staff's suggestions were very preliminary. Metro will be submitting the project for funding through the Federal "New Starts" program. It should be noted that this application is being made to fund the first Minimum Operable Segment (MOS), currently defined as the Purple Line extension to Fairfax. The Santa Monica portion of the line is proposed as the 4th MOS. There will be ample opportunity during later planning stages for the Council to provide input into the ultimate location of these stations.

Community Update

Metro held a community meeting on Thursday, August 6, 2009, at the Santa Monica Public Library to provide an update on the EIS/EIR process. Discussion points included a summary of scoping comments, an update on alternatives, the impacts that the

community could anticipate during the construction period, and the timeline for the EIS/EIR.

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