

MTA Unveils Proposed Transit Alternatives For Mid-City/Westside, Eastside, SF Valley Corridors



MTA BOARD WORKSHOP

Metro Rapid Bus and light-rail service are among transit options being considered by the MTA Board.

By ED SCANNELL

(Feb. 4) MTA transportation planners and consultants today unveiled a series of 21 potential alternatives and recommendations to improve transit mobility in three key corridors of Los Angeles County. The alternatives were discussed at a special Board workshop.

The transit alternatives were recommended for further study for the Mid-City/Westside, Eastside and San Fernando Valley east-west corridors. They range from buses traveling on exclusive lanes on city streets or on exclusive busways on existing MTA-owned railroad rights-of-way, to light rail projects, and in one corridor, a short underground light-rail segment.

Read the [CEO's full remarks.](#)

"It is critical for the MTA to accept the challenge" of providing alternative transit in three transportation corridors, CEO Julian Burke said during Friday's Board workshop. But, he said the agency can only "move ahead with projects when we know we have enough money to construct and operate them." The CEO will present a formal set of recommendations at the Feb. 24 Board meeting.

Additional public input

The Board may make a decision at its Feb. 24 meeting on which alternatives to pursue. Those alternatives will then advance to the draft environmental phase. This phase would include significant additional public input.

Based on their analysis of projected costs, potential ridership, cost effectiveness, travel time savings, environmental issues and community input, MTA staff and consultants recommended these alternatives:

EASTSIDE

Light-Rail Extension

This approximately 7-mile extension would proceed east beginning at Union Station via First Street to First and Lorena, then transition to 3rd Street and proceed east via 3rd Street/Beverly Boulevard to the Beverly Boulevard/Atlantic Boulevard intersection.

This recommended alternative would operate at-grade or would include 5.3 miles at-grade and a 1.7-mile tunnel through Boyle Heights due to the narrowness of the streets in that portion of the corridor.

MID-CITY/WESTSIDE

Wilshire Corridor: Wilshire Boulevard Bus Rapid Transit

This alternative calls for an exclusive 4.9-mile bus lane on Wilshire Boulevard (curb or center lane) to Wilshire/San Vicente and future consideration in the MTA's Long-Range Transportation Plan of a Metro Red Line subway extension.

Exposition Right-of-Way: Bus Rapid Transit/Light-Rail Transit

The Bus Rapid Transit option would be an exclusive bus lane on the Exposition railroad right-of-way with a potential full project length of 15.1 miles from downtown Los Angeles to Santa Monica.

The Light-Rail Transit option would be an extension of the Metro Blue Line from downtown Los Angeles which would operate on the Exposition railroad right-of-way with a potential full project length of 15.5 miles from downtown Los Angeles to Santa Monica.

Both the Bus Rapid Transit and Light-Rail Transit recommendations call for consideration of shorter length projects to either Crenshaw Boulevard, La Cienega Boulevard or Venice/Robertson.

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY EAST-WEST

Bus Rapid Transit

Buses would operate at-grade on an exclusive 14-mile busway from the Metro Red Line North Hollywood station to Warner Center via the Burbank/Chandler right-of-way. It would parallel several major streets,

including Chandler Boulevard, Oxnard Street, Victory Boulevard and Topham Street. In North Hollywood, Oxnard Street is being considered as a route alignment alternative to Chandler Boulevard.

3 corridor studies

The Board awarded contracts in July, 1999, to conduct the three

corridor studies. The Board's chosen alternatives will require approval by the Federal Transit Administration and the California Transportation Commission.

Completion of these projects will have to recognize the MTA's continuing obligations under the 1996 Consent Decree. Since the January, 1998, suspension of the two Metro Red Line extensions, MTA has embarked on a thorough overhaul of the Metro Bus System.

Purchased 2,403 buses

The Board approved the Accelerated Bus Procurement Plan and an additional procurement that, combined, called for the purchase of 2,403 new buses through FY 2004.

The Board recently approved the Metro Rapid Bus pilot for the Ventura Boulevard and Whittier/Wilshire corridors, two of the most congested in Los Angeles County. Metro Rapid buses will operate with signal priority, reducing travel time by as much as 25 percent.

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