



**OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
MAY 19, 2005**

SUBJECT: ROADWAY CHALLENGES ON WILSHIRE BOULEVARD

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

Receive and file report on roadway challenges on Wilshire Boulevard between Crenshaw and La Brea Boulevards.

ISSUE

The Board requested staff to report back with a plan to address roadway challenges caused by bus traffic on Wilshire Boulevard between Crenshaw and La Brea Boulevards.

DISCUSSION

Wilshire Boulevard, a 17-mile commercial and residential spine, can be considered the “backbone of Los Angeles.” There are upwards of 80,000 Metro bus boardings every day along the corridor, and close to 100,000 boardings per day when other bus operators are included, making it one of the heaviest-used bus transit boulevards in the nation.

The Wilshire corridor receives a significant amount of wear and tear from bus, automobile, and other traffic. The current roadway condition includes potholes and a severe cross-slope. Vehicles traveling in the curb lane experience severe bumps at each cross street, coupled with jolts from cracked pavement and potholes. Buses experience frequent damage to undercarriages and unpleasant ride quality for transit riders. Road conditions further deteriorated following the heavy rains this past winter.

Wilshire Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

The Wilshire BRT Project was environmentally cleared by the Board in August 2002. This project included provisions to reconstruct the curb lanes of Wilshire Boulevard between Western Avenue and San Vicente Boulevard in Wilshire Center, Park Mile, and Miracle Mile as a part of a dedicated, peak-period bus lane. This reconstruction was recommended to allow transit vehicles a more comfortable and safer ride. Reconstructing and smoothing the curb lane along this segment will mean the curb lane will be better utilized and will allow for a more comfortable transit service, as well as improved ride for other vehicles. In addition, the project proposed to install concrete bus pads at Metro Rapid Stops in West Los Angeles,

which are currently not large enough to accommodate the new 60-foot long articulated vehicles.

By a board action in February 2004, the Wilshire BRT project, which requires concurrence from the City of Los Angeles for the peak hour bus only lane, was reprioritized and moved out to 2013. If funding becomes available before that time through the TCRP program or other source, and the City of Los Angeles grants approval, the project could be ready to go in a fairly short timeframe since preliminary engineering has been completed. Staff has estimated the cost for curb lane reconstruction in both directions and the reworking of traffic signals to be about \$ 11.4 million in the segment between Wilshire/Western and Wilshire/San Vicente (approximately 4 miles). Additionally, approximately \$19 million in utility relocation costs have been identified if Metro were required to pay for utility relocations. The FEIR identified traffic improvements on other streets within the corridor of \$15.4 million to mitigate the impacts of diverted traffic during construction and operation of the peak period bus lanes.

Street Repairs & Maintenance Through Local Return Program

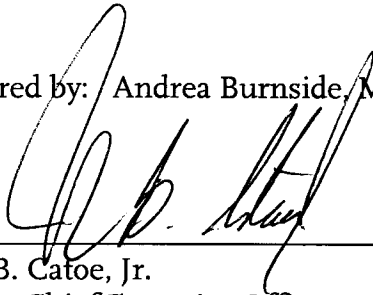
Outside of road reconstruction completed as part of a fixed guideway transit project such as the BRT, Metro does not have funding programmed for roadway repair projects due to wear and tear from buses. This has traditionally been the responsibility of local jurisdictions, which have local funds and Propositions A and C Local Return sales tax funds for this purpose. Twenty-five percent of the Proposition A tax revenues and twenty percent of the Proposition C tax revenues are earmarked for the Local Return Programs to be used by cities and the County of Los Angeles in developing and/or improving local public transit, paratransit and related transportation infrastructure. Per the guidelines, Propositions A and C Local Return can be used for, but not limited to:

- Street Improvement and Maintenance (capacity enhancements, repairs and maintenance, Transit Systems Management (TSM) efforts and safety improvements; projects must demonstrate a public transit benefit)
- Bus stop improvements and maintenance (concrete bus pads at stops, curb cuts, bus turn outs, benches and shelters)
- TSM strategies (reserved bus lanes on surface arterials, contra flow lanes, turning lanes for buses, signal improvements).

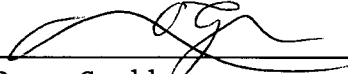
NEXT STEPS

Staff recently learned that Mayor Hahn is seeking City Council approval, though the City's FY06 budget, for \$10 million in local return funds to construct concrete curb lanes on Wilshire from Wilshire/Western to Wilshire/San Vicente (approximately 4 miles each direction). As stated above, Metro has completed the Preliminary Engineering package of drawings for the BRT project and is providing them to LADOT staff. If the City of Los Angeles were to undertake a curb lane reconstruction project in this area, rather than Metro, costs could be considerably less because the City has franchise agreements with utility providers that could greatly reduce or eliminate the costs identified above for utility relocation.

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