

**METRO SAN FERNANDO VALLEY GOVERNANCE COUNCIL  
APRIL 5, 2006**

**SUBJECT: METRO ORANGE LINE EXTENSIONS**

**ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE REPORT**

**BACKGROUND**

At the March 1, 2006 Sector Council Meeting a presentation was made to the Council concerning the possible extension of the METRO Orange Line from its current terminus via Metro ROW adjacent to the North Hollywood bus terminal to Vineland Avenue and then via surface streets to the Bob Hope Airport in the City of Burbank. Staff was requested to review current plans and provide an overview of some of the alternative extension concepts to the east as well as along the US 101 corridor to the west from Warner Center or north along Canoga corridor to Chatsworth station.

**Existing Transit Resources**

Westbound Service

The most prominent transit resource to the west is the Metro link system that serves the San Fernando Valley, Simi Valley, Moorpark, and terminates in Ventura. These trains are primarily peak period services.

Simi Valley also operates a bus line into the San Fernando Valley via the 118 Freeway which terminates at the Chatsworth Metro Link station. This service operates all day with a one (1) hour headway.

Metro customers desiring to travel from the San Fernando Valley west through the US 101 corridor have three alternatives. Line 161 which operates from Topanga Canyon and Ventura Boulevard provides local service to major employment destinations with a terminus at the Thousand Oaks Transit Center. This line operates 7 days a week and on weekdays operates 10-20 minute peak and 60 minute base headways; 30 –60 minute headways are operated on Saturdays and 60 minute headways on Sundays.

Line 422, operated by the Los Angeles Department of Transportation under contract with the MTA provides reverse commute service from downtown Los Angeles via the 101 freeway to Thousand Oaks Mall via Warner Center.

Line 423, Commuter Express, also operated by LADOT as part of its service system, provides two-way peak service to Thousand Oaks. This line does stop at Ventura and Topanga Canyon Boulevard to allow transfers. It does not operate through Warner Center.

#### Eastbound Service

Service to Burbank in the corridor is provided by three Metro lines (Lines 96, 152, 183) and by the City of Burbank. The latter service was instituted recently. There is no direct service to the Bob Hope Airport from the North Hollywood terminal although the City of Burbank plans to institute a shuttle in the near future.

#### **POSSIBLE ALIGNMENTS FOR FUTURE EXTENSIONS**

None of these concept proposals are currently being pursued in the update to the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP); however, some of the connections proposed here may be considered for inclusion in the development of the Metro Connections element.

#### Easterly to Burbank

Mr. Paul Dyson attended the Council meeting on March 1, 2006 and presented the Council with a proposal to extend the Orange Line from its current terminus through the reserved right of way to Vineland Avenue. From the reserved right of way, the line would proceed northward on surface streets to Vanowen Avenue, proceed easterly to Empire Avenue and terminate at a proposed upgraded transit terminal at the Burbank AMTRAK/Metro link station. He projected the need for a new underpass to Empire Avenue as part of the capital enhancement to the project. His proposal also seeks to abandon the current terminal location of the Orange Line system and creation of a new terminal location at the existing North Hollywood station and bus layover facility.

While the corridor along the old rail right of way exists from the North Hollywood Station to Burbank Metro Link station, the City of Burbank has upgraded the corridor to a pedestrian landscaped strip from the City line to Victory Boulevard. A single track has been preserved for the line and probably can still service the adjacent properties although there is probably insufficient room for a two-way service corridor. Further, community issues may impact the ability of a future extension along this corridor.

Traveling to the airport is a different matter altogether and there is no direct connection. A traveler from the North Hollywood Red Line terminal must take two buses to get to the airport. Depending on your location in the San Fernando Valley, there are opportunities for a one-seat ride to the airport, although the bulk of customers would likely have to take two buses. Only lines 94, 163, and 165 serve the airport directly over the length of their routes. It should be noted that Metro buses do not traverse the interior roadways of the airport but bring people to locations where shuttles or walk-in to the terminal is possible.

The airport authority recently concluded its contract negotiations with the City of Burbank and at this point is unwilling to re-open contract talks to provide an alternative

internal roadway network for use by standard MTA vehicles. Finally, the City of Burbank has obtained approximately \$1.2 million in funds to develop a transit terminal adjacent to the AMTRAK/Metro link station and depends on shuttles to move people from the rail/bus station to the passenger terminals. The City needs additional, and as of yet undetermined funds, to acquire the necessary land from the Union Pacific in order to build the new bus/rail integrated station. This may be something to be included in a list of projects to be funded under Metro Connections. However, at this point the likelihood of funding is unknown.

The Countywide Planning Department has proposed in its modeling of future conditions the extension of the Orange Line to Pasadena. The proposal, for further study in the “beyond strategic element” of the plan would run from the current terminal at North Hollywood station, south on Lankershim to the nearest eastbound entrance to SR-134 and proceed east to Pasadena exiting the freeway at Colorado Boulevard then to the Gold Line Memorial Park station. Four possible stations have been proposed at this point and include San Fernando Road, Brand Boulevard, Glendale Avenue, and Figueroa Boulevard. No studies of the locales or physical features have been undertaken at this point and other station sites may be proposed in Burbank at Buena Vista or Alameda.

### **Possible Westerly Extensions**

Westerly extensions to the Orange Line that have been discussed include using the existing right of way along Canoga Avenue to extend the service to the Chatsworth Metro link station. The right of way exists uninterrupted to the point at which it joins the mainline rail tracks. To run a direct connection would require an expansion of the right of way and in all likelihood require land acquisition to provide a clear corridor. Otherwise buses would have to exit to the surface street network and then enter the station proper off of Lassen Street.

In June 2003, the US 101 Freeway Corridor study was presented to Metro’s Board. The Board adopted the following motion for the study corridor presented in Attachment B to this document:

“CONSIDER supporting the **recommendations of the US-101 Corridor Study Steering Committee** and directing staff to take the following implementing actions:

- A. include the potential short and mid-range mobility improvement projects in the appropriate subregional section(s) of the Metro Short Range Transportation Plan (SRTP) subject to further community review and refinement, and modification by the affected agencies. Assist the sponsoring agencies in seeking funds for those projects through future Metro Call for Projects and other funding programs;
- B. include analysis of the US-101 freeway as a “Congested Corridor” in the next update of the Metro SRTP;
- C. continue to include the US-101 freeway improvements in the Strategic Element of the Metro Long Range Transportation Plan so that a long-range multi-modal

transportation vision, including transit options, can be better defined and funded; and,

- D. support Countywide and regional inter-agency ~~coordination~~ **coordinated** efforts in ~~pursuant~~ **pursuit** of innovative land use policies that would effectively promote smart growth, prevent and mitigate traffic congestion, and improve quality of life in Los Angeles County.”

The projects referenced as short and medium term improvements are shown in Attachment A to this document. The strategies included revolve around street and highway intersection improvements, implementation of the Metro Rapid system as planned to offer additional travel alternatives, implementation of additional, but unspecified local transit connections between the San Fernando Valley and downtown and selected activity centers, increasing Metro link service along the existing Ventura to Los Angeles line, and adding additional capacity to the Metro Red Line.

The framers of the report recognized the very significant and difficult process and costs that would be required to build additional freeway lanes through the corridor. The report in recommending only the short and medium range improvements states:

“The long-range improvements recommended by the TAC, however, raised major local concerns relative to the socio-economic and environmental impacts including loss of properties and resources, traffic management and detouring during construction, noise, economic viability and cost effectiveness. Of greatest concern was the need to acquire hundreds of acres of property including residential dwellings in order to implement the long-range improvement.

Upon review of the TAC’s recommendations and consideration of public and elected officials concerns regarding impacts on the communities along the freeway, the Study Steering Committee concluded that the most feasible solution was to construct proposed short- and mid-range improvements while maintaining a need for identification of a long-range solution during future planning processes.”

**Upon adoption** by the Board in June 2003, staff was directed to proceed to implement the recommended improvements pending availability of funds for capital and operating projects identified.

The Planning department in its modeling of the changes to the US 101 corridor is carrying the addition of HOV lanes in each direction from Topanga Canyon Boulevard (SR 27) to the Ventura County Line. This will allow Transit buses faster speeds if the lanes are added, but will not provide exclusivity to the service.

## **DISCUSSION OF CONCEPTUAL ALTERNATIVES**

The creation and evaluation of alternatives requires vision, community determination, and the resources to implement new and restructured services. The vision that is being sought by the Council is to provide seamless travel to, from and through the San Fernando Valley. The corridors that are most likely for development are limited both physically and some cases community opposition to potential land takings. The US 101 and SR 118 corridors are highly congested and the available transit services that make connections from Ventura County, Conjeo and Simi Valley are limited in scope. Similarly, easterly connections that are currently available are limited by manifest demand for services.

Hence, the MTA and others have turned to maximizing the operational advantages of surface street routes or other available rights of way. LADOT for example has developed some non-traditional services, e.g. Line 549 which runs from the San Fernando Valley through Burbank with stops in Glendale and Pasadena. That line is the only service that directly connects these three major cities from the Valley. LADOT staff has proposed to modify the line to make a stop at the North Hollywood transit terminal and we should support that connection. The City of Burbank has implemented a series of shuttles connecting the Red Line station to parts of their media district and downtown Burbank. Connections from these systems should be welcomed by the Council and staff will work with both agencies to facilitate joint stops.

The City of Burbank's proposal to build a new terminal at the airport will provide additional opportunities for connections to be made; however, the distance of the terminal to the airport facilities may become a limiting factor in the success of the operation. Hence, participation by the MTA through the Metro Connections program should include some mechanism to address internal distribution within an activity center like the airport to insure that once regional connections are made there is a simple and straightforward way to get from the transit terminal to the airport passenger facility.

The MTA has preserved the right of way identified in Mr. Dyson's proposal. The expansion of the Metro Orange Line at this point in time does not appear warranted. However, with the major construction projects currently underway around the North Hollywood station, creating a dedicated right of way to facilitate bus connections from the east (e.g. MTA Lines 152, 183, Burbank Shuttle connection) would improve the travel time of these services, would eliminate circuitous routings into the North Hollywood stations, and would ease traffic congestion by limiting some bus turning movements at Chandler and Lankershim Boulevards. Relocating the Metro Orange Line to the east side of Lankershim is not recommended given the high level of bus and traffic congestion already experienced at the facility. The paving and use of this available right of way should be sought aggressively by the Council.

Similarly, the Council should pursue a direct connection of the Metro Red Line subway under Lankershim Boulevard to the Orange Line Station. Whether funded through joint development, direct federal grant, or other mechanism, this project is needed not only to facilitate our goal of seamless transportation, but to improve safety conditions for people crossing Lankershim Boulevard to get to the Orange Line Station.

The modeling proposal being carried by the Countywide Planning Department is a study alignment with just four stations proposed. The easterly linkage considered by this alignment is to make the three major cities at the gateway to the two Valleys accessible by transit. As a study route, neither the line nor the route has been exposed to environmental reviews.

The Council should consider reviving the Subscription bus program to meet the needs of long distance travel in the area that cannot be met by the extension of the Metro Orange Line alone. Subscription bus provides opportunities to employers (e.g. Universal City, Burbank Media District, Jet Propulsion Laboratory) to establish group travel opportunities that provide many, but limited, access points with a single destination. Employers would sponsor a certain number of seats on a bus to render the service economic, while at the same time allowing the general public to access these services to increase travel options. This is a direct link with the Metro Connections concept and these services could be operated by MTA, by Burbank, and/or the City of Los Angeles. Joint projects are preferred outcomes of this effort. The San Fernando Valley Sector staff should also encourage additional regional connections to the Universal City station and seek to use this mechanism to improve the frequency and vitality of existing local services to Burbank proper.

The Metro Orange Line will be extended to Canoga Avenue by fall 2006. A new station will be constructed along with a parking lot for approximately 800 cars. This extension of the busway will change the loop through Warner Center and make Canoga Avenue the main street access to the stop at the transit center. Extending the right of way to Chatsworth station would be most useful if additional parking in the station area would be provided at the same time. Further, as noted above the busway make require expansion in order to get to station location because once the right of way joins the AMTRAK/Metro link right of way; there is no provision for a parallel facility. Even so, to build a parallel right-of-way to the station will require MTA to meet Federal Railroad Administration separation standards between the busway and the operating railroad.

For the SR-118 corridor, the most significant transportation resource is the region's investment in the Metro link service system. This service should be enhanced and local connections to the line should be improved to reduce auto travel within the area. Where possible, intercept parking lots should be considered.

For the US 101 corridor, while determinations are being made consistent with the adopted regional planning documents, the Sector Council may choose to recommend that one or both of LADOT services be modified to operate via the Orange Line busway to the North Hollywood terminus. As noted above, Line 422 which is operated under contract to the MTA operates through Warner Center and then rejoins the 101 freeway to downtown. Line 423 intersects with MTA services at Topanga Canyon before joining the 101 freeway to continue to downtown.

Modifying one or both of these lines has drawbacks. Line 422 was developed as a response to the Consent Decree and provides freeway bus stops at Reseda and Van Nuys Boulevards as well as two existing freeway stops on the 101 freeway at Western and

Vermont Avenues. Should the line stop at North Hollywood station these freeway stops would have to be abandoned or another service started to replace one or more of the locations. Line 423 provides service to the LADOT park and ride facility at Hayvenhurst – a major interchange point for the line. Finally, services would have to be provided that would replace the distribution part of both lines in downtown Los Angeles. As an alternative to this, the Council may wish to explore increasing service levels on MTA Line 161 changing its terminus to Warner Center and expanding the frequency of services on Line 422 from Thousand Oaks to Warner Center only.

## **NEXT STEPS**

This survey report presents a range of possible programs to enhance services. Recognizing that major capital investments are not likely to be available in the near term, staff will need to rely on improvements to existing facilities including the expansion of Rapid Bus, implementation of Metro Connections, and limited capital improvements that will serve to enhance services and reduce costs of operations with sector services. Expansion of the Metro Orange Line beyond the current planned expansion to the Canoga Avenue Park and Ride is not currently in the Long Range Transportation Plan and Program for the County. Further, significant extensions to the east or west will require significant capital dollars. Hence, it is recommended that the Council consider and set priorities for programs and thereby request the MTA Board to include them in the range of projects for the update to the Long Range Transportation Plan already underway.

As recommended for consideration here, staff is submitting a potential list of projects to recommend to the full MTA Board:

1. Construction of a street under-crossing from the Orange Line Station to the Red Line Station at North Hollywood.
2. Paving of the right of way from the North Hollywood station to Vineland Avenue, construction of street traffic controls to permit exclusive bus access for the local and city services to enter the North Hollywood bus terminal.
3. Request the Countywide Planning Department to undertake a study of the costs to provide a direct link to the Chatsworth Station for the Orange Line busway as well as construct a larger parking facility at that site.
4. Seek to participate in a proposed service enhancement for the Ventura Metro link line operated by the SCRRA. Expansion of intercept parking lots adjacent to existing stations is also recommended.
5. Consider, through Metro Connections, recommending participation in construction of an inter-modal transit facility at the Bob Hope Airport that would permit direct connection to the passenger terminals. The City of Burbank and Airport Authority would need to address internal circulation issues.
6. Seek modifications in selected LADOT and MTA services to improve connections particularly from the Conejo Valley and Ventura to Warner Center.
7. Consider the development of a subscription bus services program to enhance connections throughout the Valley, from Ventura County, supported by employers and operated by MTA, LADOT or others.

8. Suggest other options to be studied by Countywide Planning or Operations planning that would fit within the parameters of the Board adopted 101 corridor study program.

Staff will work with the appropriate departments to seek greater reviews and/or inclusion of the projects in the requisite plans and programs of the agency.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Recommended program of projects and strategies from US 101 Task Force as adopted by MTA Board
- B. Map of US 101 corridor originally studied

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Metro San Fernando Valley Service Sector



**US-101 Freeway Corridor Study**  
**Potential Short- and Mid-Range Proposed Improvement Projects**  
**(Cities will make the final determination, after community review, for projects within their jurisdictional control)**

<b>Exit Lane Improvements</b>	<b>Auxiliary Lane Improvements Westbound/Northbound</b>	<b>Auxiliary Lane Improvements Eastbound/Southbound</b>	<b>Local Interchange Improvements</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ventura Blvd/Topanga Canyon Blvd.</li> <li>▪ Canoga Avenue</li> <li>▪ DeSoto Avenue</li> <li>▪ Tampa Avenue</li> <li>▪ Reseda Blvd.</li> <li>▪ Balboa Blvd.</li> <li>▪ Hayvenhurst Avenue</li> <li>▪ N. Sepulveda Blvd.</li> <li>▪ Van Nuys Blvd.</li> <li>▪ Laurel Canyon Blvd.</li> <li>▪ Sunset Blvd.</li> <li>▪ Normandie Avenue/Melrose Avenue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Balboa Blvd. to White Oak Avenue</li> <li>▪ White Oak Avenue to Reseda Blvd.</li> <li>▪ Van Nuys Blvd. to N. Sepulveda Blvd.</li> <li>▪ Hayvenhurst Avenue to Balboa Blvd.</li> <li>▪ Echo Park Avenue to Alvarado Street</li> <li>▪ Rampart Blvd. to Silverlake Blvd.</li> <li>▪ Silverlake Blvd. to Vermont Avenue</li> <li>▪ Western Avenue to Sunset Blvd.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Vanalden Avenue to Reseda Blvd.</li> <li>▪ Burbank Blvd. to White Oak Avenue</li> <li>▪ White Oak Avenue to Balboa Blvd.</li> <li>▪ Balboa Blvd. to Hayvenhurst Avenue</li> <li>▪ Hayvenhurst Avenue to Haskell Avenue</li> <li>▪ Sunset Blvd. to Western Avenue</li> <li>▪ Santa Monica Blvd. to Melrose Avenue</li> <li>▪ Glendale Blvd. to SR110 connector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lynn Road</li> <li>▪ Moorpark Road</li> <li>▪ SR 23 North</li> <li>▪ Lindero Canyon Road</li> <li>▪ Reyes Adobe Road</li> <li>▪ Kanan Road</li> <li>▪ Agoura Road/Chesebro Road</li> <li>▪ Lost Hills Road</li> <li>▪ Las Virgenes Road</li> </ul>
<b>Arterial Street Improvements</b>	<b>Bus and Rail Transit Improvements</b>	<b>Park and Ride/Transit Centers Improvements</b>	<b>Transportation Demand Management Improvements</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve Hampshire Road/Agoura Road from Thousand Oaks Boulevard to Las Virgenes Road</li> <li>▪ Complete the connection of Agoura Road and Calabasas Road between Valley Circle Blvd./Mulholland Drive and Las Virgenes Road</li> <li>▪ Sherman Way Capacity Improvements</li> <li>▪ Ventura Boulevard Capacity Improvements</li> <li>▪ Temple Ave and Beverly Blvd. (Smart Corridor development)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Add Planned Rapid Bus Lines Corridors</li> <li>▪ Add Planned North-South Busway Project</li> <li>▪ Add local community transit service connections to the following Red Line stations between US 101/SR 134/SR 170 interchange and downtown Los Angeles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hollywood/Western (two routes)</li> <li>▪ Vermont/Sunset (two routes)</li> <li>▪ Vermont/Santa Monica/LACC (three routes)</li> <li>▪ Vermont/Beverly (six routes)</li> <li>▪ Westlake/MacArthur Park (3 routes)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Add MTA Metro Red Line capacity starting at the North Hollywood station.</li> <li>▪ Increase Metrolink service between Moorpark and Union Station</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase Park-and-Ride lot capacity along the East/West Busway based on demonstrated demand</li> <li>▪ Increase Park-and-Ride capacity at North Hollywood and Universal Red Line Stations</li> <li>▪ Study need for additional access locations to Red Line stations along Vermont Avenue based on future increased ridership and also assess the need to provide park-and-ride spaces at these locations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to support regional Rideshare and Vanpool programs</li> <li>▪ Continue to support innovative TDM programs</li> <li>▪ Transit priority systems on the following arterials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ventura Blvd.</li> <li>▪ Victory Blvd.</li> <li>▪ Sepulveda Blvd.</li> <li>▪ Van Nuys Blvd.</li> <li>▪ Topanga Canyon Blvd.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Improve traffic signal systems within the US 101 study area</li> <li>▪ Additional transit system priority and locator systems applicable to the increases in transit services that are proposed.</li> </ul>

# US-101 Freeway Corridor STUDY LIMITS

