



Metro

**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
MARCH 19, 2008**

SUBJECT: REGIONAL CONNECTOR TRANSIT CORRIDOR – STATUS REPORT

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

Receive and file this project update on the Regional Connector Transit Corridor Study early scoping workshops (Attachment A) and the alternatives identified for screening in the Alternatives Analysis (AA) Study (Attachment B).

ISSUE

During the months of October and November, staff conducted a series of early scoping workshops to solicit input on the range of alternatives to be considered in the project's AA Study. In June 2007, the Board approved the start of an AA Study for the Regional Connector Transit Corridor by awarding two contracts; one for the AA Study and the other for community outreach. These meetings were well attended by more than 130 participants. During the full 30-day comment period, a total of 88 comments were received from cities, stakeholders, organizations, civic associations and residents.

Staff has incorporated comments received through that outreach effort along with technical analysis and identified a total of eight representative alternatives that included both historical transit alignments studied within the corridor as well as new ideas regarding modes, alignments and profiles suggested by the scoping comments listed in Attachment A. Staff is now preparing to conduct a screening of these alternatives in accordance with Federal Transit Administration New Starts Program Guidelines and conduct further community outreach in preparation for retuning to the Board in Summer 2008 with recommendations on the best performing alternative(s).

DISCUSSION

The Regional Connector Transit Corridor AA Study is in the process of evaluating a range of alternative transit improvements and narrowing the number of alternatives

to improve regional rail service, be compatible with future growth and preserve local communities. The AA Study is following all federal Section 5309 New Starts Program guidelines to make us eligible for additional federal dollars. The AA Study is the first step in the federal guidelines which considers all reasonable alternatives including alignments, configurations, stations and modes such as Light Rail Transit (LRT) or Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). Early scoping is the first component of the AA Study. It gives the community and agencies an introduction to the study, provides the first opportunity for input on the development of alternatives, the development of criteria by which to evaluate the alternatives and the goals the alternatives will be measured against.

Early Scoping

The early scoping process for the Regional Connector AA included both identification of prospective participants and notification for all meetings. The intention was to both inform and solicit feedback on what transit improvements should be studied and how transit improvements should be evaluated.

The official notification process began with an early scoping notice published in Federal Register Volume 72 No. 210 on Wednesday October 31, 2007. The official scoping comment period ended on November 30, 2007. The general public and agency representatives were given opportunities to attend public meetings and provide verbal plus written comments. In addition, those wishing to provide comments could view project information on our website and respond in writing or by email.

A summary of the substantive comments is provided in Attachment A. As indicated, comments were provided through a variety of means including verbal, by letter, from email and from our information line. Participants were briefed regarding the Regional Connection Transit Corridor study area transit needs, a range of transit modes for consideration and the principal routes identified historically. Comments addressed transit mode, transit alignment, potential stations, evaluation criteria to use and general issues about the study.

Comments Received

The majority of comments received overwhelmingly supported the project goals and provided strong direction for mode, alignment and configuration considerations. The LRT was considered the preferred mode with as much underground configuration as possible due to limited right-of-way availability. The most direct alignments were identified including 1st, 2nd and Flower Streets. Service to the station locations of Civic Center and Bunkerhill were preferred. Service to Little Tokyo, while preserving the historic and cultural significance of the community, was identified as key when evaluating alternatives. Parking, safety, community preservation and operations were the most discussed issues of concern.

These comments provide useful input to the definition of alternatives and their subsequent evaluation and will be incorporated as the Regional Connector AA Study progresses.

Alternatives Identified for Initial Screening

Based on review of previously studied alternatives, input received during the early public scoping period, and an initial review of the conditions in the project study area, the alternatives identified for initial screening have been defined. These alternatives are listed and illustrated in Attachment B.

There are a total of eight build alternatives with variations derived from over 30 alternatives which can be categorized as one of the following:

- LRT Alternatives via Flower, Figueroa and 2nd Streets primarily with a transit dedication on 2nd Street (Alternative 1a and 1b)
- LRT Alternatives via Temple, Figueroa and Flower Streets (Alternative 2)
- LRT Alternatives via Temple, Main/Los Angeles Couplet, 2nd and Flower Streets with dual track or couplet on Los Angeles and/or Main, and a transit dedication of 2nd Street (Alternatives 3a, 3b and 7)
- LRT Alternatives via Flower and 2nd Street primarily, punching through the 2nd Street tunnel to connect to Flower Street (Alternatives 4a and 4b)
- LRT Alternatives Underground via 2nd Street and Flower Streets with options for underground or at-grade configuration at Alameda Street (Alternatives 5, 6, and 8)

Unless specifically mentioned, each alternative operates primarily in an at-grade configuration with the exception being the connection at the 7th Street Metro Center Station. A No Build Alternative and a Transportation System Management (TSM) Alternative have also been developed.


NEXT STEPS

Staff will prepare detailed analysis to refine the current build alternatives, the No Build and the TSM alternative. Community outreach will continue throughout the process to gauge community support and concerns for alternatives. The results will be provided to the Board during the summer of 2008 with recommendations for further action.

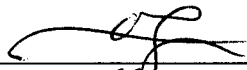
ATTACHMENTS

- A. Early Scoping Executive Summary
- B. Summary of Alternatives Identified for Screening Report

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Attachment A

Summary of Early Scoping Process

Stakeholder Identification and Communications

A comprehensive stakeholder database for the study area was developed for the purposes of a targeted email and direct mail notifications to elected representatives, neighborhood councils, homeowner associations, neighborhood organizations, business groups, community-based and civic organizations, convention-and travel related businesses, media outlets, BIDs, and property management firms serving residential areas. Early Public Scoping meetings were announced using mailers and emails sent from this database, in conjunction with display advertisements, on-board "Take-Ones" on Metro vehicles, media, information telephone lines, and other grassroots outreach. A Metro webpage was created for the study which provides electronic access to information about the project including a Fact Sheet and Frequently Asked Questions, the dates, times and locations of the early scoping meetings, as well as an opportunity to provide public comment.

To ensure that the study addresses the growing prevalence of the use of "new" media in this region, outreach was also conducted to 34 "blogs" in the Southern California region that host online discussions about transit, traffic, community development, and neighborhood issues.

Many of these blogs posted notices about the study and the meetings, comments about the study, and summaries of the meetings after they occurred. In many cases, lively on-line "conversations" were initiated. Although it is difficult to ascertain how many "hits" each blog received about the study, the online conversation did contribute to raising awareness about the project and to generating turnout at the community meetings. Additionally, articles and comments posted on the blogs provided the study team with additional insight into public sentiment about the study.

All those in the study database either received two email notices about the Scoping Meetings i.e. an initial notice followed by a reminder, or one piece of direct mail. The offices of elected officials representing portions of the project study area were also contacted and alerted about the meetings.

Multiple organizations were contacted requesting that they forward invitations to the Scoping Meetings to their members or constituents. These organizations included transportation advocacy groups, neighborhood and business organizations, civic groups, and academic institutions.

Scoping Meetings & Other Community Meetings during Early Scoping Period

One Public Agency Scoping Meeting was held on October 30, 2007, and attended by representatives from 15 local, state, and federal agencies. Two Public Scoping Meetings

took place in November 2007, and drew approximately 150 people, many of whom provided testimony and/or written comment. The meeting agenda included an open house, a formal presentation, and a facilitated public comment period.

During the public comment period, we also attended meetings at the request of various organizations with support for the study, including Los Angeles City Council member Jan Perry, LADOT Street Standards, Grand Avenue Committee, Central City Association, Downtown Neighborhood Council, and the Little Tokyo Service Center.

Summary of Comments from Early Scoping Meetings

The overwhelming majority of comments received at the November 2007 early scoping meetings supported the need for a Regional Connector to enhance the efficiency of the current and future rail system by providing through service between the Metro Blue Line, Gold Line, Gold Line Eastside Extension and Expo Line, and serve to link these rail corridors directly to Union Station. Most commentators supported almost equally a Grand Avenue or a 1st Street alignment, below grade and utilizing Light Rail Transit (LRT) technology. Several potential stations received wide popularity, including, in order of their level of support, Little Tokyo, 7th Street/Metro, Bunker Hill, Union Station, Main/1st and Civic Center (i.e., in the northern portion of the study area). No comments were received opposing the Regional Connector. Many commentators specifically pointed out the need to develop a transit system that connects multiple lines, as well as expanding the 7th Street/Metro station to accommodate enhanced service and upgrading various operational systems. Of those providing feedback about the evaluation criteria, the majority thought that access was paramount.

Mode	Street Car (3) LRT (15), BRT (1) Local service (1), PRT (1) Rail (2)	Grade	No preference (1) At grade (4), Below grade (36), Above grade (3), Not at grade (1)
Stations	7 th Street Metro Station (10) 7 th Street Metro Station/Gold Line (1) Alameda/1 st (5) Alameda/3 rd (1) Alameda/Washington (15) Broadway (2) Bunker Hill (8) Central City (1) Chinatown (4) Civic Center (9) East Los Angeles (2) Fashion District (3) Financial District (3) Flower/1 st (4) Flower/2 nd (2) Flower/3 rd (3) Flower/4 th (2)	Flower/5 th (1) Flower/5 th (2) Flower/6 th (1) Flower/Washington (2) Glendale/Burbank (3) Grand Avenue Project (6) Grand/2 nd (3) Grand/Hope (1) Hill/1 st (1) Hill/2 nd (1) Historic Core (3) Historic Subway Station (1) Hope/1 st (2) Little Tokyo (13) Los Angeles/2 nd (1) Los Angeles/3 rd (1) Los Angeles River (1) Main/1 st (7)	Main/2 nd (1) Main/3 rd (1) Main/6 th (1) Main/7 th (1) Residential buildings (2) San Pedro/2 nd (2) San Pedro/3 rd (4) Silverlake (1) Spring/1 st (1) Spring/2 nd (1) Temple/3 rd (1) Temple/San Pedro (1) Union Station with Metrolink and Blue Line (8) USC/Expo Park (1) Washington Blue line stop (2)
Alignments	1 st Street (9) 2 nd Street (5) 3 rd Street (2) 4 th Street (1) 5 th street (1) Alameda (1)	Broadway (2) Circle downtown (1) Couplet at 1 st /2 nd (2) Extend Blue line (4) Flower (3) Figueroa/Cesar Chavez (1)	Jefferson (1) Los Angeles Street (1) Main Street (1) Pico Boulevard (1) Spring (1) Through Service (2)

	Aliso (1)	Grand Avenue (9) Hill (1) Hope (2)	I-405 (1)
Issues	Upgrades to power distribution, signals, and control systems (4) Solar panels at stations (1) Should connect with all lines (5) Increase DASH service (1) Change from colors to number line designation (1) Use four cars (3) Improve station maintenance (2) Headways (2)	Expand 7 th Street Metro Station (4) Increase safety on lines and at stations (2) Use Gold line tunneling technique (1) Concerned about potential loss of local service (1) Color code platforms (1) Local traffic impacts (1) Transit congestion (2) 4-tracks (1) Expand study area (3)	
Evaluation Criteria	Air quality (1) Pedestrian, stroller, and ADA access (3), Impact to downtown development (1), Build 4 lines (2)	Street events (fairs, parades, marches) (1) Headways (1) "Y" configuration at Little Tokyo (1)	
Other	Supports project (32) Connections to additional transit lines (21) Access to Westside (4) HOV Lanes on I-10 (3) Sees other projects as higher priorities (5) Connections to airports (1) Does not want to see Little Tokyo become the line's terminus (2)	Raise money locally to fund project (2) Put Gold line below grade (1) Increase speed of Gold line from South Pasadena to Los Angeles (1) Don't raise fares to pay for project (2) Increase local bus service now (1) Use private financing (1) Make parking available (1) Museum at station (1)	

Regional Connector Transit Corridor Build Alternatives Identified for Screening

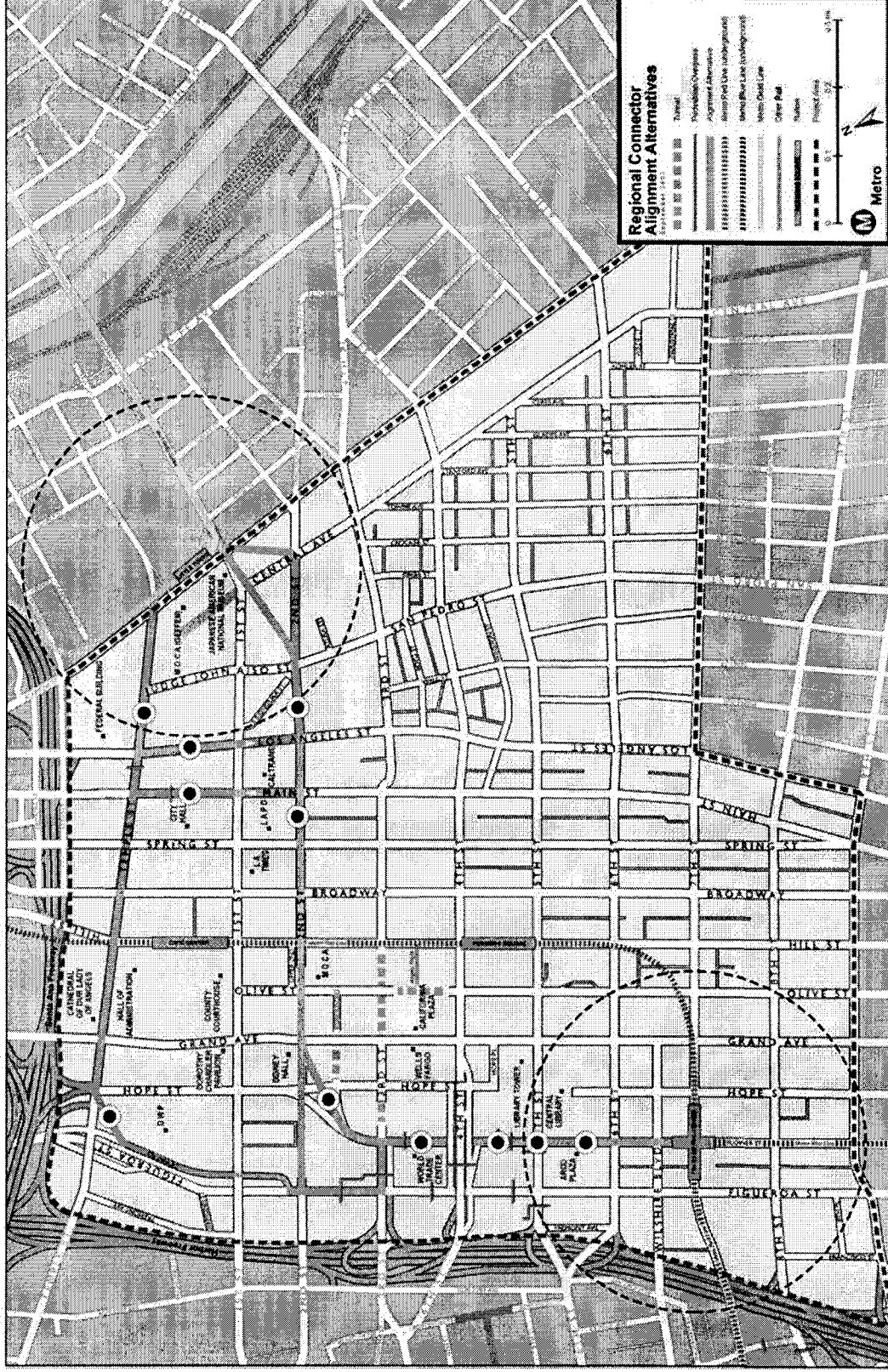
Attachment B

Alternative	Mode	Configuration	Stations	Comments
1a	LRT	Underground/2nd St. Tunnel: 44% At-Grade: 56%	2	Serves Little Tokyo/Civic Center and Financial District with transit dedication on 2nd Street. Predominantly at-grade with least amount of stations.
1b	LRT	Underground/2nd St. Tunnel: 33% At-Grade: 67%	2	Resurfaces as soon as possible from 7th Street Metro Center Stations and locates station at-grade across from the World Trade Center.
2	LRT	Underground: 23% At-Grade: 64% Aerial: 13%	3	Uses Temple, Figueroa and Flower predominantly. Services Cathedral of Our Lady of Angels and office space. In close proximity to Dorothy Chandler Pavilion and County Buildings. One underground station next to Central Library.
3a	LRT	Underground/2nd St. Tunnel: 46% At-Grade: 54%	3	Uses Temple and a couplet on Main and Los Angeles (1 track on each street). Services Civic Center, Grand Avenue and Financial District with 2 underground stations. Transit dedication of 2nd Street is assumed.
3b	LRT	Underground/2nd St. Tunnel: 38% At-Grade: 62%	3	Resurfaces as soon as possible from 7th Street Metro Center Stations and locates station at-grade across from the World Trade Center. 2nd Street transit dedication assumed.
4a	LRT	Underground/2nd St. Tunnel: 49% At-Grade: 51%	3	Uses a transit dedicated 2nd Street. Resurfaces as soon as possible from the 7th Street Metro Center Station.
4b	LRT	Underground/2nd St. Tunnel: 60% At-Grade: 40%	3	Maintains two underground stations and uses a transit dedicated 2nd Street.
5	LRT	Underground: 94% At-Grade: 6%	3	Crosses at-grade across Alameda Street. Uses three underground stations to service the Civic Center, Little Tokyo, Grand Avenue and Financial Districts
6	LRT	Underground: 103%	3	Entire alignment is underground. Reconstruction of existing 1st Street and Alameda Street alignments is required in order to place a portal east of Alameda. This will require relocation of the Little Tokyo/Arts District Station to a location further west.
7	LRT	Underground/2nd St. Tunnel: 56% At-grade: 44%	3	Uses Temple and Los Angeles with dual track instead of couplet. Assumes a transit dedication of 2nd Street. Services Little Tokyo, Grand Avenue and Financial District.
8	LRT	Underground: 103%	3	Avoids tunneling under existing uses as much as possible. Reconstruction of existing 1st Street alignment and Alameda Street Alignment is required in order to place a portal east of Alameda. This will require relocation of the Little Tokyo Station further west.




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Regional Connector Transit Corridor Universe of Alternatives Identified for Screening



Regional Connector Transit Corridor No Build Alternative

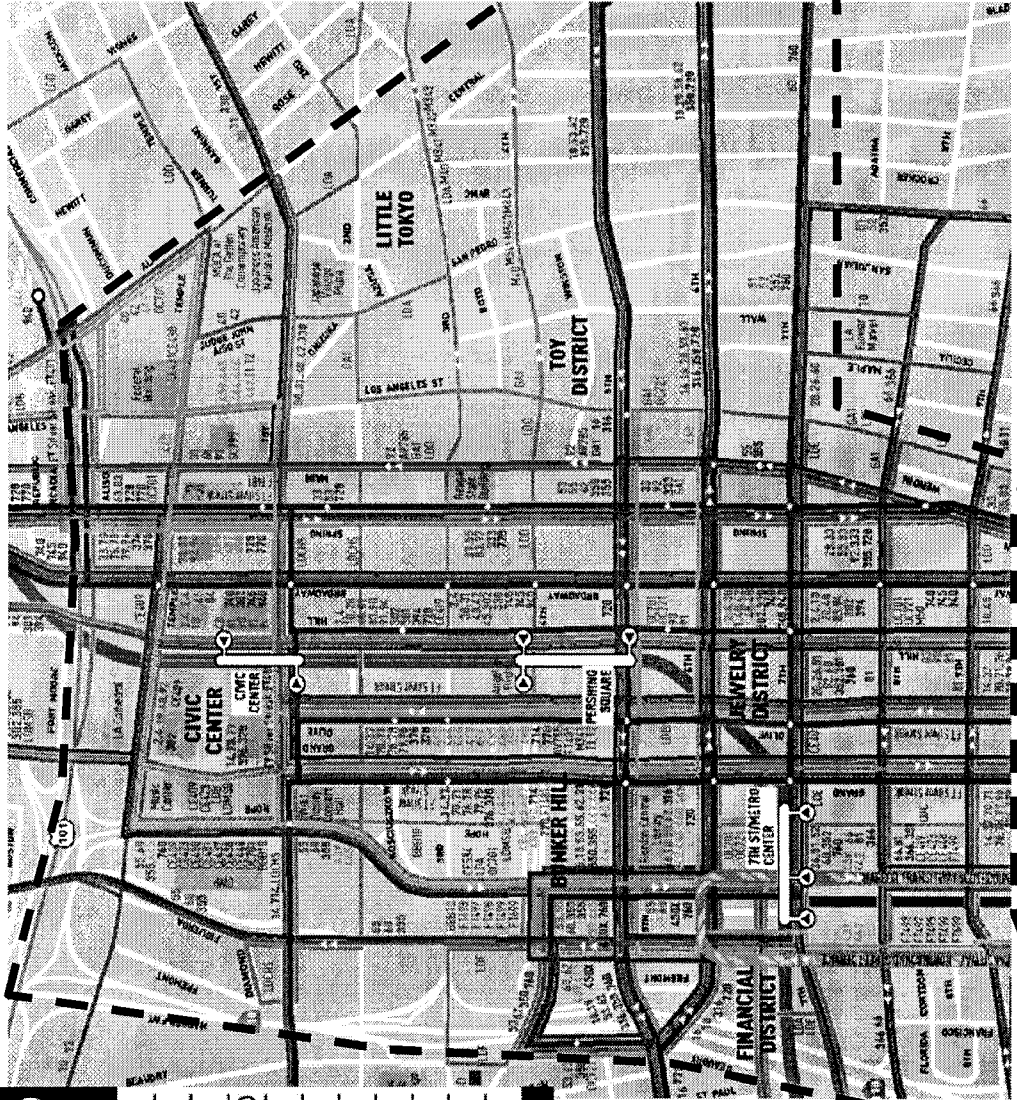


System Map

Metro Bus Line	4	118	288	318	478	559	603
Metro Rapid Line & Stop	728						
Municipal Bus Line	810						
Metro Rail Line & Station							
Metro Limer & Station							
Transitway & Station							
Metrolink Line & Station							
Interstate Freeway							
US Highway or Freeway							
State Highway or Freeway							

Scale/Miles (Approximate): 0 1/2 1 2 3

JAN 2008 Subject to Change 88-103 02/08/08/08



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Regional Connector Transit Corridor Transportation System Management (TSM)

