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MTA Issues Final Environmental Report on 14-mile Cross-Valley Busway

By ED SCANNELL

(Feb. 14, 2002) The MTA has issued the final environmental report for a planned 14-mile Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) "busway," that would speed the daily travel of thousands of commuters between Warner Center and the Metro Red Line subway North Hollywood station.

If the MTA Board votes to certify the report at its Feb. 28 meeting, the MTA would begin final design of the \$329.5 million project. Construction of the busway could begin in spring 2003 and the busway could begin operations in spring 2005.

"When the busway opens, a commuter will be able to make the trip from the future Warner Center Transit Hub to North Hollywood in approximately 35 to 40 minutes, including stops," said Board Chairman John Fasana. "This amounts to a tremendous savings in time when compared to on-street bus service which today takes 55 minutes for the same trip, and which will only lengthen as congestion increases."

The Final Environmental Impact Report for the San Fernando Valley East-West Transit Corridor Project includes a detailed mitigation plan that addresses community concerns about the impact of construction and operation of the busway.

The busway would pass through communities that include North Hollywood, Valley Glen, Van Nuys, Sherman Oaks, Encino, Tarzana and Woodland Hills.

Fully landscaped busway

The busway would be built in the median of the Burbank/Chandler right-of-way. Typically 100 feet in width, the right-of-way will be fully landscaped with groundcover and other plantings, including more than 4,000 new trees. Bordered with some 29,500 feet of sound walls, the busway will include a number of pedestrian paths with crosswalk signals.

Stations would have amenities typically associated with light-rail transit, such as covered waiting platforms, art elements, security lighting and an appealing design. A passenger information system at each station would inform travelers when the next bus is due.

Thirteen busway stations would be located at major cross streets and trip

destinations, spaced approximately one mile apart along the route. While service frequencies would be adjusted as demand for service grows, initially during peak travel periods, headways would vary between seven and ten minutes in each direction.

The LADOT will employ technology to briefly extend the duration of green signal lights to allow the smooth flow of buses operating on the busway, while not adversely impacting north-south traffic.

Park-'n-ride lots at various locations along the route would accommodate some 3,000 vehicles, augmenting existing parking spaces at the North Hollywood Station and at the LADOT Balboa Boulevard park-'n-ride lot.

The project will include a cross-valley bikeway. The MTA will begin the bikeway design as part of the busway design and is seeking funding so the two projects could be built concurrently.

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