



NEWS

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MTA BOARD CONSIDERS TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES AT WORKSHOP

**MTA UNVEILS PROPOSED TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES FOR
MID-CITY/WESTSIDE, EASTSIDE AND SAN FERNANDO VALLEY CORRIDORS**

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

The transit alternatives recommended for further study for the Mid-City/Westside, Eastside and San Fernando Valley east-west corridors 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.

The MTA Board may make a decision on which alternatives to pursue as soon as its regular monthly meeting on February 24. The alternatives chosen by the Board 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 presented 21 potential options for possible environmental review. The following are the recommended alternatives:

EASTSIDE — Light Rail Extension

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

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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 bus lane on Wilshire Boulevard (curb or center lane) to Wilshire/San Vicente (4.9 miles) and further future consideration in 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 consist of an exclusive bus lane on the Exposition railroad right-of-way with a potential full project length from downtown Los Angeles to the city of Santa Monica of 15.1 miles.

The Light Rail Transit option would consist of 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 from downtown Los Angeles to Santa Monica of 15.5 miles.

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 busway from the Metro Red Line North Hollywood Station to Warner Center (14 miles) via the Burbank/Chandler right-of-way which parallels several major streets

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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.

The MTA Board awarded contracts in July 1999 to conduct the three corridor studies. The lead consultant for each corridor is as follows: Korve Engineering, Inc. (Mid-City/Westside); Jenkins/Gales & Martinez/Parsons Brinckerhoff (Eastside); and Gruen Associates (San Fernando Valley East-West).

The alternatives chosen by the MTA Board will require approval by the Federal Transit Administration and the California Transportation Commission.

Completion of these projects will have to recognize MTA's continuing obligations under the 1996 Consent Decree which requires MTA to meet a schedule of reductions in the number of standees on Metro buses and to add new bus service.

In addition to the review of potential transit alternatives by staff, since the January 1998 suspension of the two Metro Red Line extensions, MTA has embarked on a thorough overhaul of the Metro Bus System. The MTA Board approved the Accelerated Bus Procurement Plan and an additional procurement which combined called for the purchase of 2,403 new buses through FY 2004.

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

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