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January 19, 2011

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

THROUGH: ARTHUR T. LEAHY *by [signature]*
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

FROM: MARTHA WELBORNE *WWW*
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COUNTYWIDE PLANNING

SUBJECT: WILSHIRE BUS RAPID TRANSIT (BRT) PROJECT

ISSUE

This report provides an update on the status of the Wilshire Bus Rapid Transit (Wilshire BRT) project since it was last presented to the Board at the December 9, 2010 meeting.

DISCUSSION

The Wilshire BRT Project seeks to construct curbside peak-period bus lanes along Wilshire Boulevard from just west of downtown Los Angeles to the Santa Monica city limit, excluding the City of Beverly Hills. In June 2010, the Wilshire BRT Project Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (DEIR/EA) was released. A comprehensive community outreach program was conducted throughout the development of the DEIR/EA, including four public hearings held in June 2010 and a 45-day public review period from June 10, 2010 through July 26, 2010. This project will be funded with Federal Transit Administration Very Small Starts Program funds.

At the December meeting, the Board considered the Wilshire BRT Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (FEIR/EA) and directed staff to exclude a one-mile segment from Selby to Comstock in the Westwood area (Attachment A). A new alternative removing this segment will be evaluated and included in a revised FEIR/EA. We anticipate bringing the revised FEIR/EA to the Board for approval in April 2011.

The Board also directed staff to conduct a separate technical analysis to assess travel time delay and traffic impacts in the mixed flow lanes along the project corridor. This work will be conducted by LADOT staff and reported as part of our April Board report.

On January 12, 2011, the City of Los Angeles Transportation Committee requested a status report from LADOT and Metro staff regarding the Wilshire BRT project. After hearing testimony from the Bus Riders Union, representatives from the Selby to Comstock and Brentwood areas, environmental groups, and others, the Committee approved a motion affirming the City's support for a 5.4-mile continuous Wilshire Boulevard peak-hour bus lane project from South Park View Street to the Beverly Hills City limit at San Vicente Boulevard and requesting that Metro complete the necessary additional environmental review and analysis for such a project. It was suggested that this segment could be the first phase of a project that could expand westward in the future, in participation with the Cities of Beverly Hills and Santa Monica.

The Committee's motion is expected to be heard by City Council on January 28, 2011. This motion, if implemented, would eliminate the Wilshire BRT project west of Beverly Hills to the Santa Monica city boundary and would retain the portion east of Beverly Hills to MacArthur Park (Attachment B). In order to consider the City's request however, it must also be included as an additional alternative in the FEIR/EA.

In order to meet FTA funding deadlines for up to \$23 million of federal funds available for this project, MTA must submit to FTA a funding agreement application by June 2011 and must receive FTA approval by mid-September 2011. Given these approaching federal deadlines, it is important both for staff to immediately initiate any remaining environmental analysis and to obtain MTA Board approval in April.

In consideration of MTA Board direction and anticipated direction from the City Council, we are proceeding to add two alternatives to the project's FEIR/EA – 1) modifying the project by removing bus lanes in the one-mile section from Selby to Comstock as directed by the Metro Board, and 2) modifying the project by removing bus lanes west of Beverly Hills in their entirety and implementing a bus lane project east of Beverly Hills to MacArthur Park as requested by the Los Angeles City Council Transportation Committee.

The cost of this work is within contract authority limits so we are able to proceed without further Board action. The current traffic impact analysis contract amount is \$389,719. The additional traffic impact analysis needed to study these two additional alternatives would increase the current contract amount to \$489,466, within the \$500,000 contract authority that was already established. The money is currently budgeted in the FY11 budget under cost center 4240 (Regional Transit Planning), Account 50316 (Professional and Technical Services).

A revised FEIR/EA will be presented to the Board in April that analyzes these two alternatives. At that time, the Board will be asked to approve a preferred alternative and certify the environmental document. The Wilshire BRT Project and FEIR/EA must then

be presented to the Los Angeles City Council for final project approval and concurrence with Findings of Fact and a Statement of Overriding Considerations. In order to complete the environmental process, the Board and City Council must be in agreement on a preferred alternative. We have advised FTA staff of these proposed changes and will work with them closely as we proceed. While FTA has indicated that they will not make their final funding decision until a preferred alternative is approved by the Board and City Council, we will notify the Board if we become aware of any concerns that could threaten federal funding approval.

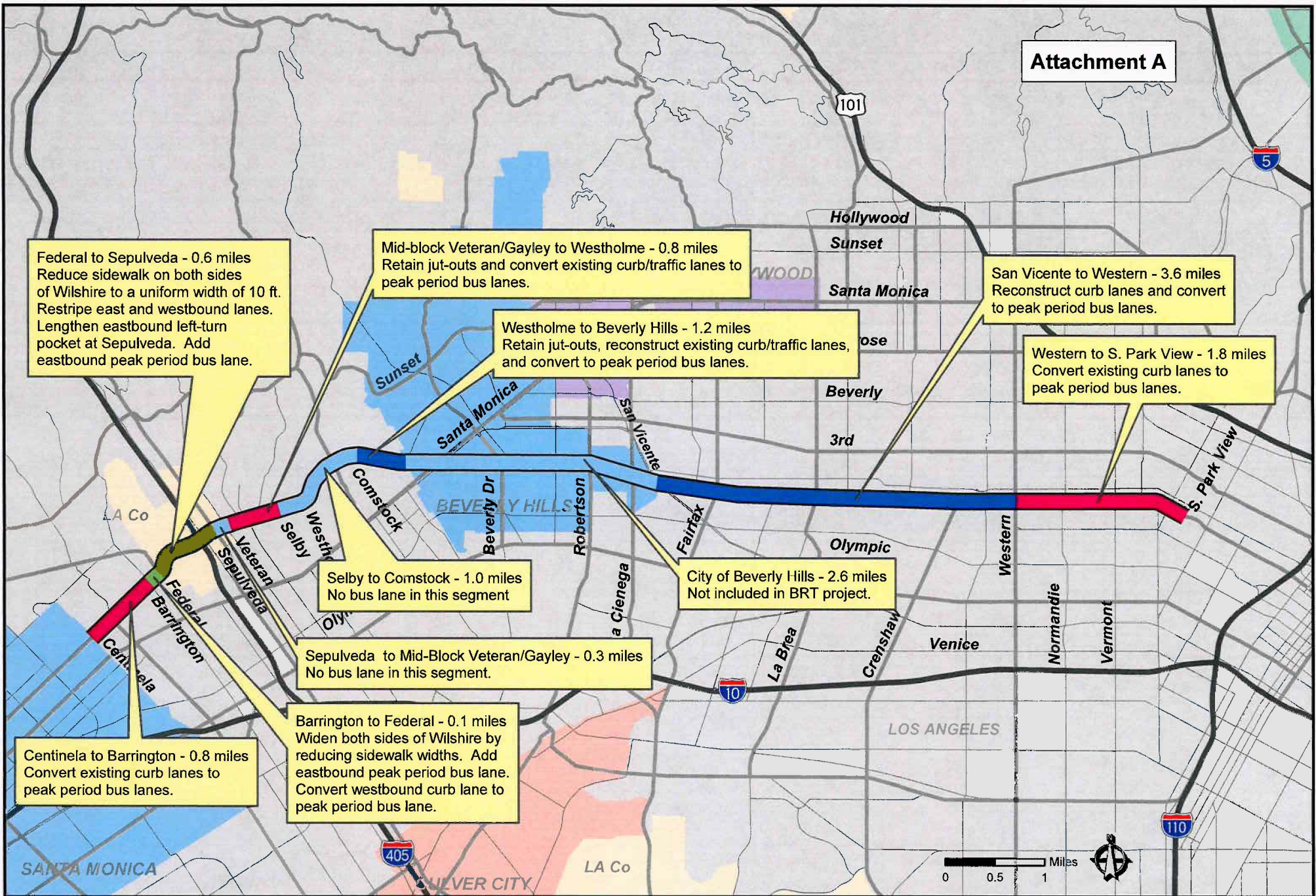
NEXT STEPS

Staff will conduct further analysis required for the two additional Wilshire BRT Project alternatives, and present a revised FEIR/EA to the Board in April.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Map of Wilshire BRT Project Alternative Without Selby to Comstock Segment
- B. Map of Wilshire BRT Project Alternative San Vicente to South Park View

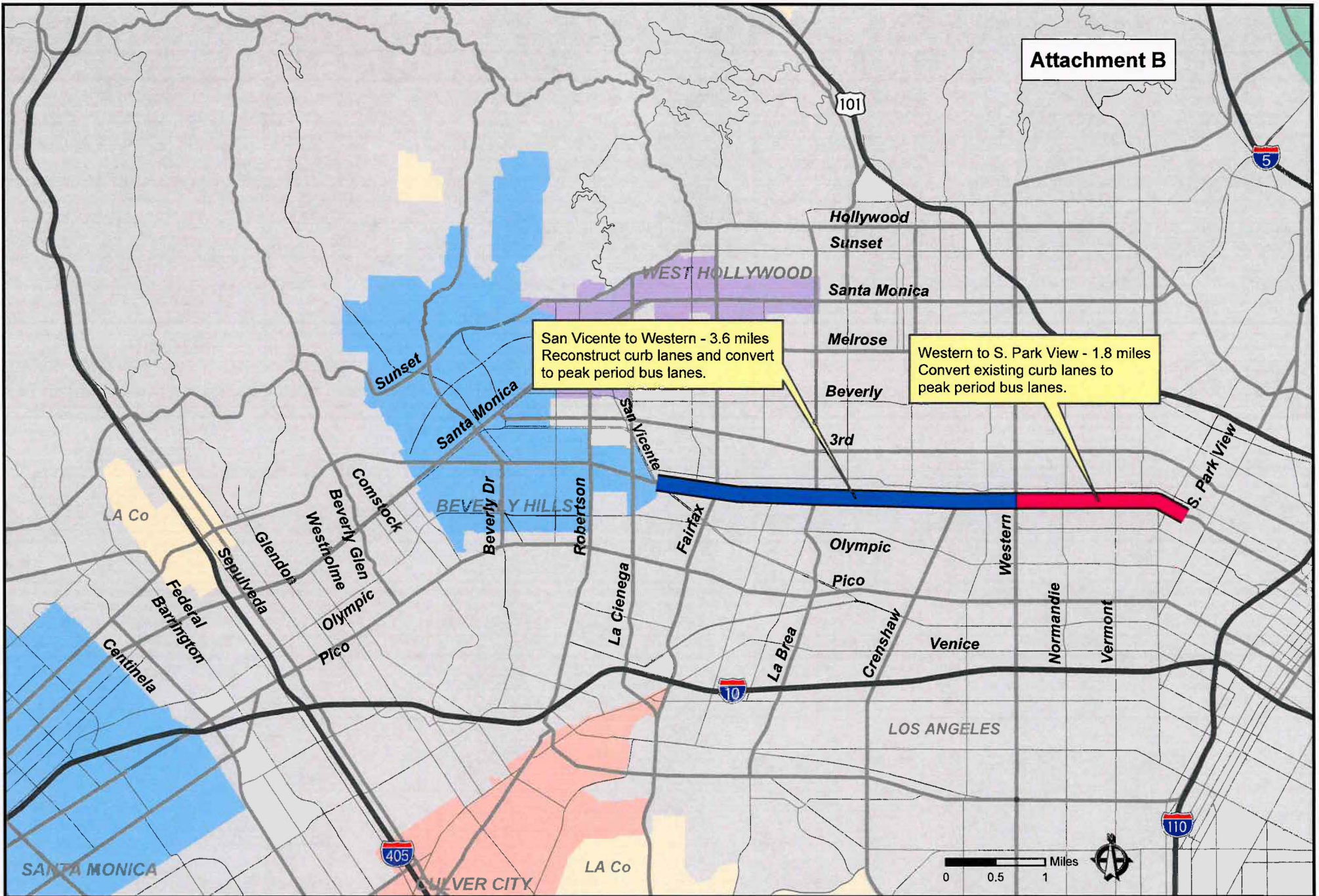
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Wilshire Bus Rapid Transit Project

Without Selby to Comstock Segment





Wilshire Bus Rapid Transit Project

San Vicente to S. Park View Only

