

# Federal funding: everybody wants some!

BY STEVE HYMON , OCTOBER 20, 2009

With Metro's [long-range plan](#)

([http://www.metro.net/board/Items/2009/10\\_October/20091014P&PItem10.pdf](http://www.metro.net/board/Items/2009/10_October/20091014P&PItem10.pdf))

scheduled for a vote Thursday, things around One Gateway Plaza are starting to heat up.

Case in point: [A letter from 14 members of Congress](#)

([http://www.metro.net/news\\_info/press/images/fedLetter102009.pdf](http://www.metro.net/news_info/press/images/fedLetter102009.pdf))

landed in the building Tuesday morning requesting that the Board of Directors seek federal money for three additional projects: The Gold Line Foothill Extension from Azusa to Montclair, the Crenshaw Corridor project (likely to be a light rail line) and the Eastside Gold Line Extension, which will travel from East L.A. to either South El Monte or Whittier.

The letter comes about a month after the Board voted unanimously to [request federal funding](#)

([http://www.metro.net/news\\_info/press/Metro\\_152.htm](http://www.metro.net/news_info/press/Metro_152.htm)) for two projects — the subway extension on the Westside and the downtown regional connector, the two planned lines expected to have very high ridership.

The Congress members in their letter say that federal money for the subway and regional connector could take several years to flow, so it would make sense in the meantime to try to secure money for other projects. “The Gold Line Foothill Extension project, Azusa to

Montclair, is developed enough to be ready for Federal New Starts funds in the years before the Westside Subway Extension and the Regional Connector Transit Corridor,” write the Congress members.

The long-range plan due for a vote on Thursday has the subway opening to Fairfax in 2019, the same year the downtown connector would open. In the plan, the Crenshaw Corridor is scheduled to open in 2018, the Gold Line Eastside Extension in 2035 and the Gold Line is unfunded beyond the Pasadena-to-Azusa leg scheduled to be complete by 2017.

The letter was signed by the following Congress members: Jerry Lewis, Lucille Roybal-Allard, Mary Bono Mack, Adam Schiff, Judy Chu, Diane Watson, Grace Napolitano, David Dreier, Gary Miller, Ken Calvert, Maxine Waters, Jane Harman, Linda Sanchez and Joe Baca. It’s certainly a healthy slice of the local Congressional delegation, but it’s also not the entire local delegation.

In response to the letter, Metro Board Chair Ara Najarian released the following statement on Tuesday afternoon:

*We welcome the dialogue that is taking place with our Congressional Delegation as we come together for the good of the region and put our best projects forward to receive New Starts funding.*

*We agree that it is imperative that we have a robust, long-term federal strategy that brings as much federal funding for LA County’s transportation needs as possible. That is why I am in Washington D.C., now, along with our CEO Art Leahy, working with our Congressional Delegation to ensure that we remain united and work together to find*

*ways to fund all of the important projects needed in Los Angeles County.*


*Our region cannot afford to lose federal funding to other parts of the state and nation. We were pleased that the Metro Board of Directors united in moving both the Regional Connector Transit Corridor project and the Westside Subway Extension forward in an attempt to get our fair share of New Starts funding.*

Of course, Congress has a large degree of control over federal purse strings. It remains to be seen how the above members would react if the Board chooses to keep its federal funding plan intact. Also unknown is whether federal funding of the Gold Line and Crenshaw projects would result in less money for the downtown connector and the subway.


Related: [A q&A on the long-range plan \(long-range-plan-a-long-time-coming/\)](#) posted here earlier today.

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