



**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE  
September 20, 2006**

**SUBJECT: SAN FERNANDO VALLEY NORTH/SOUTH TRANSIT CORRIDOR  
IMPROVEMENT**

**ACTION: APPROVE STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENVIRONMENTALLY  
CLEAR AND BEGIN PE FOR THE CANOGA EXTENSION OF THE  
METRO ORANGE LINE WHILE CONCURRENTLY WORKING  
WITH LADOT TO IDENTIFY EAST VALLY PROJECTS THAT  
COULD BE READY TO CONSTRUCT BY JANUARY 2009**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Authorize the Chief Executive Officer to:

- A. Begin environmental clearance and Preliminary Engineering (PE) for a northern extension of the Metro Orange Line along the Metro-owned Canoga rail right-of-way to the Chatsworth Metrolink Station.
- B. Continue to work with the City of Los Angeles, Department of Transportation (LADOT) to refine and environmentally clear alternative bus speed improvement projects along the corridors identified in the eastern portion of the San Fernando Valley North/South Transit Corridor Study.

**ISSUE**

On July 6, 2000 Metro received a \$100 million state Traffic Congestion Relief Program (TCRP) earmark to be used to construct a north/south bus transit project in the San Fernando Valley (SFV) that connects with Ventura Boulevard Metro Rapid Bus service and the Metro Orange Line. Metro used approximately \$2 million of the earmark to complete the San Fernando Valley North/South Transit Corridor Study and related activities. Legislation authorizing the TCRP program expires on January 1, 2009. To request allocation of the remaining funds, Metro must environmentally clear and complete PE for a SFV north/south bus project prior to September 2008. Completing environmental clearance and PE would enable staff to request a California Transportation Commission (CTC) allocation vote for the project's design/build component before the TCRP legislation expires.

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The staff recommendation is consistent with the Metro 2001 Long Range Plan that includes funding and implementation of a San Fernando Valley north/south transit corridor project.

## **OPTIONS**

The Board could choose not to authorize the CEO to move forward with the environmental clearance and PE of the Canoga Extension of the Metro Orange Line or not instruct the CEO to work with LADOT to determine which of the smaller projects identified in the San Fernando Valley North/South Transit Corridor Study could be cleared and allocated by January 1, 2009. Staff is not recommending these options, however, as this would not maximize Metro's chances of being able to use the TCRP funds earmarked for a San Fernando Valley north/south bus transit project.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

Funds are included in Metro's FY07 Budget in cost center 4370 project #405513, task #1.01 to begin environmental clearance and PE on elements of a SFV north/south bus transit corridor project. Metro expects to use TCRP funds for these activities. Staff will return to the Board prior to awarding a consultant contract for the environmental and PE work.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Board approved the San Fernando Valley North/South Transit Corridor Study in April 2003. The San Fernando Valley North/South Transit Corridor Study recommended a number of bus speed improvements and station enhancements as shown in Attachment A. The San Fernando Valley North/South Transit Corridor Study recommended that Metro Rapid Bus services be started on Sepulveda and Reseda in addition to the lines already planned for Van Nuys and Lankershim/San Fernando. All four of these Metro Rapid lines are either open, or scheduled to open in the near future. Recommended bus speed improvements included dedicated bus lanes along segments of these Metro Rapid Lines and widenings of roadways and intersections to enable buses to move through with limited delay. Enhancement projects included pedestrian lighting, street trees and benches, bike racks, curb extensions and stamped asphalt/pedestrian crossings within a half-mile of Rapid Bus stations.

The San Fernando Valley North/South Transit Corridor Study also identified one north/south alignment that would operate primarily on a dedicated/exclusive right-of-way and that was the Canoga Extension of the Metro Orange Line. The San Fernando Valley North/South Transit Corridor Study recommended that this alignment be a continuation of the Metro Orange Line, north from Warner Center for a distance of approximately five to six miles, with the alignment concluding at the Chatsworth Metrolink Station.

The Canoga Extension would begin at the Metro Orange Line Canoga Station and proceed north on a Metro-owned railroad right-of-way, which parallels Canoga Avenue, to Plummer Street where Metro could either build a grade crossing over the Metrolink/Amtrak tracks or divert buses to on-street operations to the Chatsworth Metrolink Station. Metro staff estimates that the Canoga Extension of the Metro Orange Line would cost approximately \$135 million to \$165 million, in escalated dollars to environmentally clear, design and construct. This cost assumes that on the final northern portion of the alignment buses would transfer to on-street operations to the Chatsworth Metrolink Station, rather than proceeding on an overpass over the Amtrak/Metrolink tracks.

The Canoga Extension of the Metro Orange Line has emerged as a promising north/south bus speed improvement alternative identified in the San Fernando Valley North/South Transit Corridor Study that can make timely use of the TCRP funds. Ridership demand has exceeded projections for the initial years of the current Metro Orange Line indicating the potential popularity of a northern extension. Metro owns the right-of-way on which buses would operate so right-of-way acquisition would be minimal, relocation of existing on-street parking would not be an issue, and there would be no need to remove lanes of mixed flow traffic.

Also, to ensure timely use of available TCRP funds, Metro has been working with LADOT staff to identify other projects in the San Fernando Valley North/South Transit Corridor Study that could potentially be ready by the 2009 TCRP funding deadline. The potential improvements are shown in Attachment B. A number of these improvements would, however, require removal of on-street parking for business or residential uses, conversion of a mixed flow traffic lane, narrowing of sidewalks, or acquisition of additional right-of-way. Metro has requested an estimate from LADOT regarding the amount of funding that would be required for the City to environmentally clear and complete PE for these improvements.

For the environmental clearance of the Canoga Extension, Metro would need to initiate work on the state required California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) document. Staff would not recommend pursuing federal funds because completing a National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) document would take too much time and thereby, may jeopardize the state TCRP allocation. Attachment C illustrates the time staff anticipates it will take to environmentally clear the project, complete PE and have the project ready for a design/build allocation vote from the CTC.

## **NEXT STEPS**


If the Board authorizes the Chief Executive Officer to move forward with the Canoga Extension of the Metro Orange Line, staff would seek CTC approval for the project's environmental clearance and PE phase while concurrently drafting a Request For Proposal (RFP) for these phases of the project. Once CTC approval is ascertained, staff would take steps to release the RFP and to hire a consultant to complete the work. Staff would return to the Board to award the environmental and PE contract. Staff will also continue discussions with LADOT as to which of the bus speed improvements along the eastern arterials could be completed in a timely manner. Following additional conversations with LADOT, staff may

return to the Board to award some funding to LADOT to conduct environmental clearance and PE for these smaller bus speed improvements.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Projects identified in the San Fernando Valley North/South Transit Corridor Study.
- B. List of San Fernando Valley North/South Transit Corridor Study projects that the City has identified as projects that could potentially be obligated before January 1, 2009.
- C. Projected timeline of how soon the Canoga project could be ready to be forwarded to the CTC for a TCRP allocation vote for the project's design/build component.

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**Attachment A**

**Improvements Recommended For The SFV N/S Corridor**

Alternative	Elements	Phase One	Phase Two	Phase Three	Phase Four
Canoga	Off-Street Transitway				
	Park-and-Ride Lot(s)				
Reseda	Metro Rapid Bus Service				
	Improved Transit Stations				
	Transit Signal Priority				
	Curb Extensions at Stations				
	Station Accessibility Enhancements				
Sepulveda	Metro Rapid Bus Service				
	Improved Transit Stations				
	Transit Signal Priority				
	Dedicated Northbound Bus Lane (partial)				
	Dedicated Northbound Bus Lane (full)				
	Truman/Brand Intersection Improvements				
	Station Accessibility Enhancements				
Van Nuys	Curb Extensions at Stations				
	Station Accessibility Enhancements				
	New Signal/Peak Period Bus Lane Addison-Chandler				
	101 Freeway Interchange Improvement				
	Curb Reconstruction at Metrolink Station				
	Parthenia/Van Nuys Intersection Redesign				
	Woodman Median Removal Sidewalk Widening				
	Flood Control Channel Bridge Widening				
Lankershim-San Fernando	Peak Period Bus Lanes Within Existing Street				
	Peak Period Bus Lanes with Street Widening	<b>NOT RECOMMENDED</b>			
	Station Accessibility Enhancements				
	Metro Red Line Station Additional Portal				
Multiple	Additional Parking Sylmar/SF Metrolink				

**San Fernando Valley North-South Transit Corridor -  
LADOT Preliminary Recommendations and Cost Estimates for Priority Projects  
That Could Potentially Be Ready to Construct by January 1, 2009.**

- **Sepulveda Boulevard**

- Peak Period Bus Lanes Between Rinaldi Street and Nordhoff Street \$300,000
- Station Accessibility Enhancement \$12.6 M
- Peak Period North Bound Bus Lane Between Ventura Boulevard and Chatsworth Street; Will Require Parking Removal and at Two Key Intersections Right-of-Way Acquisition and Street Widening \$37 M

- **Van Nuys Boulevard**

- US 101 Freeway/Van Nuys Boulevard Interchange Improvements; Contribution to a \$45 Million Project \$5 M
- Peak Period Bus Lanes Between Addison Street and Chandler Boulevard (.5 mile) \$200,000
- Bus Lanes Between Burbank Boulevard and Oxnard Street; Would Require Parking Removal \$100,000
- Southbound Bus Queue Jumper Lane at Vanowen St. \$50,000
- Bus Approach Lane on Southbound Van Nuys Boulevard at Pathenia Street \$150,000
- Widen Bridge Over Flood Control Channel Between Beach Avenue and Arleta Avenue \$1.5 M

- **Lankershim Boulevard/San Fernando Road**

- Underground Portal Between Metro Orange Line and Metro Red Line \$17.25 M
- Parking Capacity Expansion at Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station; 800 Space Parking Garage \$16 M
- Station Accessibility Enhancements \$10.5 M
- Northbound Bus Queue-Jumper Lane Approaching Victory Boulevard \$25,000

- **Reseda Boulevard**

- Add Southbound Left Turn Phase on Plummer at Woodley \$25,000
- Southbound Bus Signal Queue-Jumper at Sherman Way \$25,000
- Capacity Enhancement at Reseda/Nordhoff to Facilitate Bus Movements \$500,000

