



Metro

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952

213.922.9200 Tel
213.922.9201 Fax
metro.net

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PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
November 15, 2006

SUBJECT: EL MONTE TRANSIT VILLAGE

ACTION: CONSENT TO MASTER SPECIFIC REZONE PLAN
EL MONTE TRANSIT VILLAGE

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the Chief Executive Officer to execute such documents as are necessary to consent to the newly proposed specific plan for re-zoning of Metro's El Monte bus terminal facilities to facilitate the potential joint development of Metro's real property and facilities in conjunction with adjacent land owned by Caltrans and the City of El Monte.

ISSUE

The City of El Monte (City) proposes to enact a specific plan to re-zone land owned by Metro, as well as adjacent contiguous land owned by Caltrans and the City, comprising approximately 55 total acres in order to facilitate and allow expanded development uses in furtherance of a plan for the eventual development of the entire specific plan area as a "transit village". The City requires the consent of area landowners, including Metro and Caltrans in order to impose the specific plan. The re-zoning would allow – but not require – additional development uses on Metro land at Metro's option, while maintaining the current transit uses,

BACKGROUND

The total proposed "transit village" area subject to the proposed specific plan for re-zoning is comprised of over 55 acres of total land area including and adjacent to Metro's El Monte Bus Terminal. The area is graphically depicted on the attached map (Exhibit A). All of the included Transit Village property is now owned by the parties jointly undertaking a currently active development planning study - Metro, Caltrans and the City of El Monte. In February of 2006, Metro entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (the "MOU") among The City of El Monte, the El Monte Community Redevelopment Agency, Caltrans and Metro, to consider the feasibility of undertaking the redevelopment of publicly and privately held lands in close proximity to the El Monte Busway Terminal – including the integration of high-density residential and mixed-use development.

The El Monte Busway, completed in 1974, is approximately 11 miles long and connects to Union Station in downtown Los Angeles with travel times of approximately sixteen minutes. In addition, Metro's Sector Office for Division 9 is housed at the El Monte terminal area and the terminal is utilized by Foothill Transit and Greyhound Bus Lines as well as Metro to serve the San Gabriel Valley, and is one of the nation's busiest bus-only

terminals. The nearby Metrolink station, while not part of the project area, also provides additional transportation connections.

Metro has recently broken ground for construction of its new Transportation Office and Sector Administration Building - being constructed on Caltrans land adjacent to Metro's bus yard - and various of the park-and-ride lots, parking structure and bus access-ways and turnarounds are located on the Metro and Caltrans parcels. The property adjacent to the Metro/Caltrans properties is all currently owned by the City of El Monte.

In 1986 a previous memorandum of understanding was executed among the El Monte Community Redevelopment Agency, the Southern California Rapid Transit District (a predecessor transportation agency to Metro) and Caltrans for the purpose of considering joint development of the site area to integrate transit as well as housing, retail, commercial and other uses. Since the time of the 1986 agreement and the adoption of a new redevelopment plan for downtown El Monte, the State of California has enacted the Transit Village Development Planning Act of 1994, intended to increase transit ridership and reduce vehicle traffic on highways by encouraging new development and redevelopment on lands close to transit stations such as the El Monte Busway Terminal.

Various planning and development efforts were sporadically undertaken in succeeding years. However, in 2002 and 2003, more concentrated planning efforts occurred as the City of El Monte entered into an exclusive agreement with Titan Group to provide conceptual development plans for the area.

The recent planning and analytical efforts involving the El Monte Transit Village project involve a joint undertaking among Metro, Caltrans, the City of El Monte and its Community Redevelopment Agency. Current efforts include the City, as lead agency, undertaking various traffic and environmental studies as well as regular meetings of the MOU participants to further the planning process.

Potential Project Scope:

The large project area will likely be developed in phases, with the earliest activity being concentrated on City-owned lands adjacent to the Caltrans/Metro site. This is currently envisioned as a mixed use residential/retail site that will contain primarily for-sale housing (some 900 units) with a smaller number of apartment rental units (approximately 300 units) and with a substantial affordable component to each. In addition, early phases are also scheduled to include substantial retail components as well as public amenities, including new parks, creation of a river walkway along with other pedestrian water-oriented features, bikeways and other public improvements as an adjunct to the first project phases.

Proposed joint public-private development of Caltrans and/or Metro sites are envisioned for later project phases, however as an initial planning and land use matter, Metro and Caltrans are exploring and analyzing lot line adjustments and/or land swaps to more appropriately align ownership of underlying land with the uses of each entity. In addition, both Metro and Caltrans are participants in the analysis of the overall development planning and in the City's process of specific re-zoning for the area which, among other things, will create new

developable air rights and entitlements encompassing Caltrans and Metro land. These new specific zoning activities will, in turn, facilitate potential later public/private development over Metro operations as part of the Transit Village project. A map depicting the current evolution of the overall “Transit Village” area is appended as Attachment C.

Transit Village Concept:

Metro’s El Monte terminal, along with the adjacent Caltrans and City properties, are uniquely situated to creation of a true “transit village”. Modern-era transportation-oriented development planning concepts for such areas envision a large development district that addresses the following characteristics:

- A neighborhood centered around a transit station that is planned and designed so that residents, workers, shoppers, and others find it convenient and attractive to patronize transit.
- A mix of housing types, including apartments, within not more than a quarter mile of the exterior boundary of the parcel on which the transit station is located.
- Other land uses, including a retail district oriented to the transit station and civic uses, including day care centers and libraries.
- Pedestrian and bicycle access to the transit station, with attractively designed and landscaped pathways.
- A transit system that encourages and facilitate intermodal service, and access by modes other than single occupant vehicles.
- Increased transit revenue yields.
- Promotion of a safe, attractive, pedestrian-friendly environment around transit stations.
- Reduction of the need for additional travel by providing for the sale of goods and services at transit stations.
- Demonstrable public benefits beyond the increase in transit usage also include the following:
 - Relief of traffic congestion
 - Improved air quality
 - Increased stock of affordable housing
 - Redevelopment of depressed and marginal inner-city neighborhoods
 - Promotion of infill development and preservation of natural resources
 - Promotion of job opportunities

- Improved cost-effectiveness through the use of the existing infrastructure
- Increased sales and property tax revenue
- Reduction in energy consumption

In addition, the potential development also holds significant advantages in terms of Metro's longer-term planning for the bus maintenance and other facilities that are part of the project area, including making available additional funding opportunities and sources for upgrades and modernizations to existing facilities, access-ways and parking and operational facilities.

Governmental and Agency Involvement:

In addition to the direct involvement of the City of El Monte and its Redevelopment Agency, there have been strong indications of interest from various state legislators who have evidenced a willingness to advocate funding aid from state sources. Also, the County of Los Angeles is currently studying a possible amendment to its tax increment sharing agreement under which it would defer receipt of some funds in order to catalyze first phase infrastructure. Given that the targeted development area does not now produce taxes, the County could eventually benefit substantially from a successful mixed-use project at the El Monte site.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Consent to the proposed specific rezoning of Metro's El Monte facility is not anticipated to have any significant impact on the 2006-2007 budget.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board could: (1) reject the recommendation to consent to the rezoning; (2) propose alternative re-zoning for the site; or (3) accept the recommendation to consent to the rezoning through the proposed specific plan.

Staff has recommended that consent to the specific plan as such re-zoning would not impact current or planned transit operations at the site, and would enable Metro – at its option – to consider additional development opportunities on its site that would both provide additional sources of revenue and increased public transit ridership.

NEXT STEPS

Metro Board authorization to consent to the inclusion of Metro's El Monte facility in the specific plan re-zoning area will allow for the re-zoning of Metro's facility and enable future development of the site in conjunction with the plans of the City of El Monte and Caltrans for creation of a "transit village" including multiple uses (residential, retail, office and commercial) in conjunction with maintenance of the area as an important public transit hub.

ATTACHMENTS

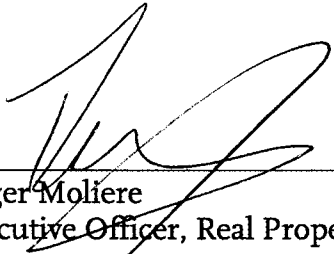
ATTACHMENT A: Map of Proposed Specific Plan Area

ATTACHMENT B: Map of Potential Development Uses

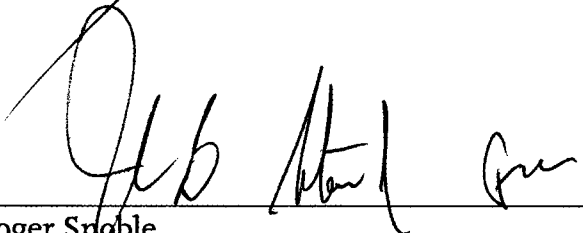
ATTACHMENT C: Map Depicting Current Design Evolution

Prepared by:

Roger Moliere, Executive Officer



Roger Moliere
Executive Officer, Real Property Management & Development



Roger Snoble
Chief Executive Officer



VALLEY BLVD

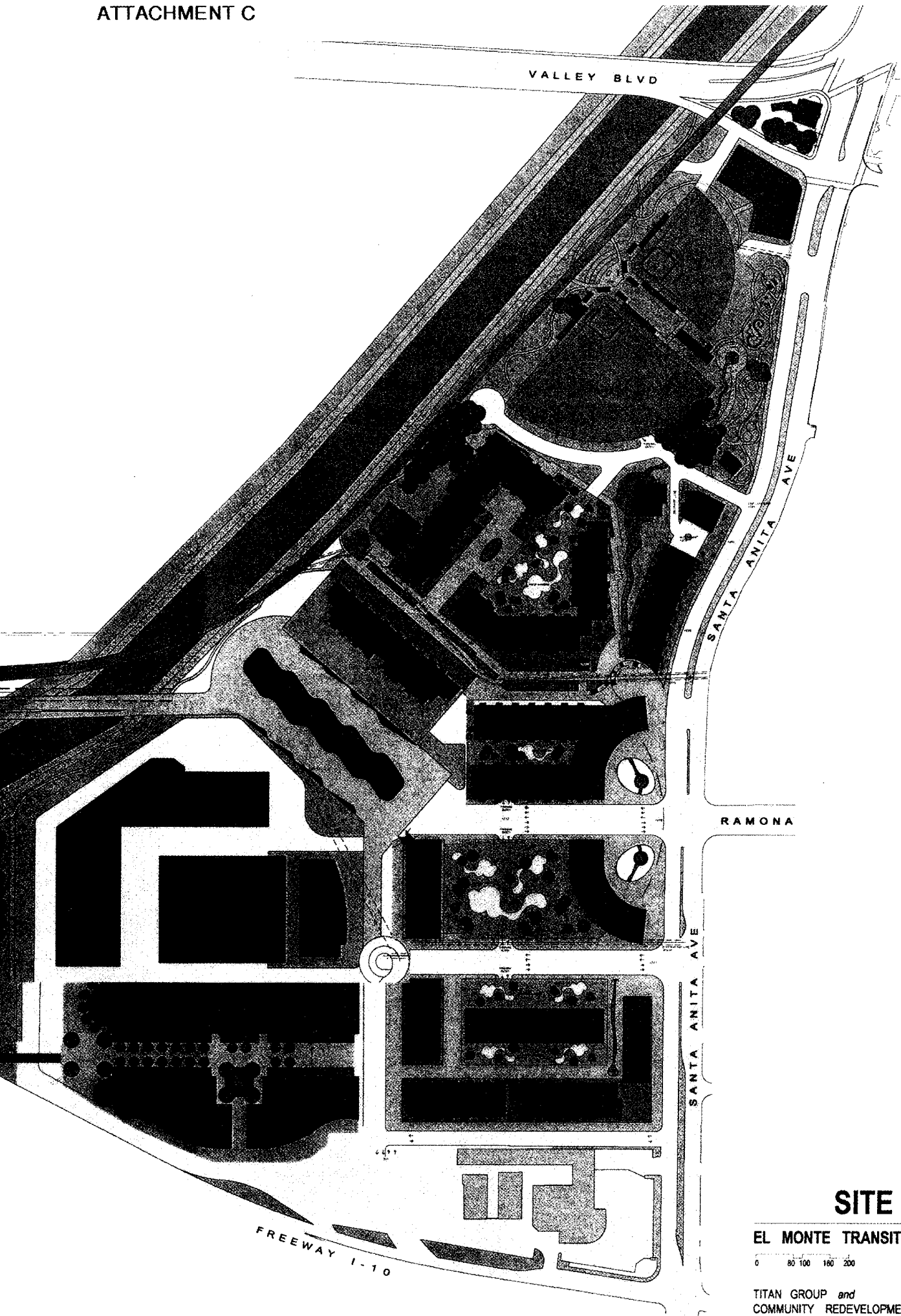
RIO HONDO
CHANNEL

SANTA ANITA

AVE

I-10 FREEWAY

EXHIBIT A
PLANNING STUDY AREA



SITE PLAN

EL MONTE TRANSIT VILLAGE

0 80 100 160 200



TITAN GROUP and
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

