



Metro

Metropolitan Transportation Authority

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PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
June 18, 2008

SUBJECT: CANOGA TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR

ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION

- A. Receive and File the Canoga Transportation Corridor Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR);
- B. Adopt the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA), for the project as follows:
 - The Canoga Extension of the Metro Orange Line (MOL) on our rail right-of-way from the existing Canoga park-and-ride lot to the Chatsworth Metrolink Station. Attachment A shows the Canoga Transportation Corridor;
 - New station platforms at the Canoga park-and-ride, Sherman Way (with park-and-ride), Roscoe, Nordhoff, and the Chatsworth Metrolink Station;
 - A bikeway and transportation enhancements/greenway for the four mile length of the project; and
 - An overcrossing/grade-separation over active railway tracks and Lassen Street, providing direct access into the Chatsworth Metrolink Station.
 Attachment B includes the LPA Executive Summary
- C. Eliminate from further consideration the on-street, mixed flow extension to the SR-118; and
- D. Receive and file status report on City of Los Angeles, Department of Transportation (LADOT) study efforts to implement bus speed improvements in the eastern San Fernando Valley (SFV) on Van Nuys, Sepulveda, Lankershim, and Reseda Boulevards.

ISSUE

The DEIR for the Canoga Transportation Corridor of the MOL has been completed. In order for work to commence on the project's Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) and Preliminary Engineering (PE), the Board must select a project LPA.

In July 2007, a project Alternatives Analysis (AA) was finalized that included eight build alternatives. Those alternatives were screened to three build alternatives and a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) required no-build option. The screened alternatives were presented to the Planning and Programming Committee in September 2007 for their review. The build alternatives are:

- **Busway Alternative** – extension of the MOL along our former rail right-of-way extending from the Canoga park-and-ride lot to the Chatsworth Metrolink station including a parallel bicycle/pedestrian path similar to the existing MOL from North Hollywood to the Canoga Station.
- **On-Street Dedicated Bus Lanes Alternative** – widening of Canoga Avenue into our right-of-way to provide dedicated bus-only lanes along the curbs and adjacent bicycle/pedestrian paths.
- **Transportation Systems Management Alternative** – addition of local bus service on Canoga Avenue and headway improvements to several existing Metro bus routes.

An SR-118 extension was reviewed, but received significant public opposition from the community. In addition, the topography of the area made it difficult to locate an appropriate sight for a park-and-ride lot.

In August 2007, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for \$900,000 was executed with LADOT for the purpose of enabling the City to identify bus speed improvements on eastern SFV north/south streets and to enable LADOT to complete PE on the identified improvements. This report provides a status on LADOT's efforts to date.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Draft 2008 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) includes the SFV North/South Corridor project in the Constrained (funded) element with a Revenue Operations Date (ROD) of 2016 for a first phase and 2026 for a second phase. A total of \$214.6 million has been reserved for the project in the LRTP in 2016, with an additional \$111 million identified in later years.

The cost of the Canoga Transportation Corridor project is estimated at \$191 million in December 2007 dollars inclusive of previous and current planning costs. This figure will be refined during PE through value engineering. Using inflation rates consistent with the LRTP, the anticipated 2013 costs is projected to be \$251 million and \$291 million in 2016. If we proceed with the FEIR and PE now and then go directly into the design-build project phase, the project could be completed by 2013. Being that most of the Phase I project funds are coming from TCRP (\$100 million) and Prop 1B (\$70 million), moving the project's ROD to 2013 may be possible subject to the availability of these funds.

OPTIONS

The Board could choose to select one of the other three alternatives carried forward in the DEIR or select another design option for accessing the Chatsworth Metrolink Station and adding a station at Parthenia. The Board could also choose to extend the project to the SR-118 Freeway by operating busway service on-street in mixed flow traffic on Devonshire and DeSoto.

None of these options are recommended because the Busway option proved to be safer, faster and less expensive than the on-street alternative while enjoying significant public support. The grade separation of the active railway tracks and Lassen proved to be cost competitive with other options considered and proved to be safer, faster and result in less disruption to existing traffic on Lassen. The Parthenia Station would put stations too close together, thereby negatively impacting operational efficiencies. Finally, an SR-118 extension would only attract approximately 200 additional boardings a day by 2030 and it will be difficult and expensive to locate a sight for a park-and-ride due to area topography.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The FY09 budget includes \$3.0 million of TCRP dollars in Cost Center 4370, Project Number 405513, Orange Line Canoga Extension, Task 1.01 to complete the EIR, PE, and community outreach for this extension.

The FY09 budget contains \$700,000 of TCRP dollars under Cost Center 4370, Project Number 405513, Orange Line Canoga Extension as a subsidy to LADOT to complete work on identifying eastern SFV north/south bus speed improvements and PE.

BACKGROUND

In March 2007, the Board awarded a \$5.9 million professional service contract for the completion of environmental clearance and PE for a Canoga Transportation Corridor extension of the MOL. At the same meeting, it approved a \$337,152 contract for community outreach. Lastly, the Board made \$900,000 available to LADOT to enable the City to complete an analysis and PE for how best to increase bus speeds in the eastern SFV with an emphasis on Van Nuys, Sepulveda, Lankershim and Reseda Boulevards.

Canoga Transportation Corridor:

Before initiating environmental clearance work, an Alternatives Analysis (AA) was completed and presented to the public at two project Scoping meetings held in July 2007. This work was followed by a Screening Analysis to narrow the number of project alternatives for connecting the existing MOL with the Chatsworth Metrolink Station. The Screening Analysis was completed in August 2007 and presented to the Planning and Programming Committee in September 2007.

Public Review Process:

On March 3, 2008, the completed DEIR was released to the public for the CEQA required public review and comment period, which concluded on April 16, 2008. During this period, two public hearings were held and 45,000 mailers were sent notifying the community of the release of the DEIR and to solicit comments. The DEIR was published on our website and delivered to libraries and the offices of elected officials. In response, approximately 150 comments were received. Of the comments received, many expressed concern pertaining to noise and the placement of soundwalls/privacy walls, but also strong support for the busway alternative on our rail right-of-way.

Project Features:

Based on the environmental analysis, the LPA report recommends the alignment include five stations: the Canoga Park-and-Ride, Sherman Way, Roscoe, Nordhoff, and the Chatsworth Metrolink Station. At the Sherman Way station, a new park-and-ride lot with approximately 250 spaces is recommended to replace parking that would be lost at the Canoga Park-and-Ride due to project construction.

Where space permits, a 17 foot bicycle/pedestrian path is recommended adjacent to the busway, along with appropriate/sustainable landscaping. Where space is tight, the bicycle/pedestrian path would be narrowed to a multi-purpose path that would be 10 to 12 feet wide. Per LADOT input, the bicycle/pedestrian path will be designed to City, State and Federal specifications and once completed, it is anticipated that this project element, based on Los Angeles City Council approval, will become part of the City's overall bicycle network. The City currently maintains the MOL bicycle/pedestrian path and it is anticipated that they will maintain this proposed four mile extension of that path. Based on initial discussions with City representatives, they appear receptive to assuming responsibility, contingent upon City Council approval, for this 4-mile extension as long as it is constructed to City, State, and Federal specifications.

For safety, cost and efficiency reasons, an overpass is recommended to grade-separate the busway from the active railroad tracks and Lassen Street and to provide direct access to the Chatsworth Metrolink Station. Due to the close proximity of the railroad tracks to our right-of-way as the alignment approaches Lassen, a number of options were considered to cross the tracks in a manner that would be acceptable to Metrolink, Union Pacific (UP) Railroad, and the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), while maintaining safety and bus efficiencies.

An at-grade busway crossing would likely not be favorably received and the option of acquiring land that would enable the busway to avoid the railroad tracks proved to be expensive due to the high cost of area real estate.

Project Impact and Findings:

Lease terminations - The Busway alternative will result in the termination of approximately 65 leases along the right-of-way. The terms of most of the tenant agreements entered into after acquisition of the right-of-way states that the right-of-way was purchased for transportation purpose and when the land is developed for those purposes, the tenant must vacate the property at no expense to us. However, those tenants whose agreements we inherited from UP are entitled to relocation benefits. The businesses along the right-of-way include an assortment of building supply companies, used car dealerships, storage yards, and other commercial and industrial uses as well as billboards. Because of the wide right-of-way width on the southern portion of the alignment it is feasible to co-exist with four existing tenants as long as those tenants can remain with the amount of land they lease being narrowed. We have approached those tenants and most seem receptive to the prospect of co-existing with a Busway.

Parthenia Station - A station was considered at this location due to its close proximity to a mobile home park and other residential properties. However, the station is not recommended as there is no east/west bus service on Parthenia and because the location would be too close to the recommended Roscoe and Nordhoff Stations where there is good east/west bus service. Also, because the station would be close to these before mentioned stations, the additional stop would negatively impact operational efficiencies.

SR-118 Extension - This extension was reviewed, but is not recommended due to significant public opposition, undesirable area topography, and difficulty in locating an appropriate sight for a park-and-ride lot. In addition, modeling was completed that indicated that only 200 boardings per day would be realized as a result of the extension by 2030. This low ridership would not make the extension cost effective.

LADOT Eastern SFV Work:

LADOT has completed an analysis of potential improvements for the four north/south corridors in the eastern SFV. The preliminary improvements that are being considered by LADOT include: bus lanes, signal timing changes, bus stop re-locations, street widenings, and other transportation and bus stop enhancements. They are now evaluating the bus speed efficiencies that would result from the identified projects against the cost and impact the improvements would have to existing traffic movements/mobile air emissions and on surrounding commercial and residential land uses. Over the next few months, LADOT will be refining the identified bus speed improvement projects in coordination with elected officials and our Operations department. After the improvements are agreed upon by all affected parties, the City will complete PE. It should be noted that the funded LADOT work covers only project identification and PE. If any project environmental clearance and community outreach work is required, than we would need to work with LADOT to determine how best to proceed with that work.

NEXT STEPS

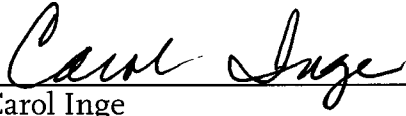
After the selection of the LPA, work will commence on the Canoga Transportation Corridor's FEIR and PE. This process will take approximately six months to complete and during this process, the project cost estimates will be refined. We anticipate returning to the Board in the winter to certify the FEIR and to approve the project so that a Notice of Determination can be filed.

We will work with LADOT to develop an MOU for their assumption of maintenance of the project's bicycle/pedestrian path. Additionally, we will report back on the status of LADOT's efforts in the eastern SFV.

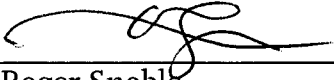
ATTACHMENT

- A. Canoga Transportation Corridor Study Area
- B. Locally Preferred Alternative Report Executive Summary

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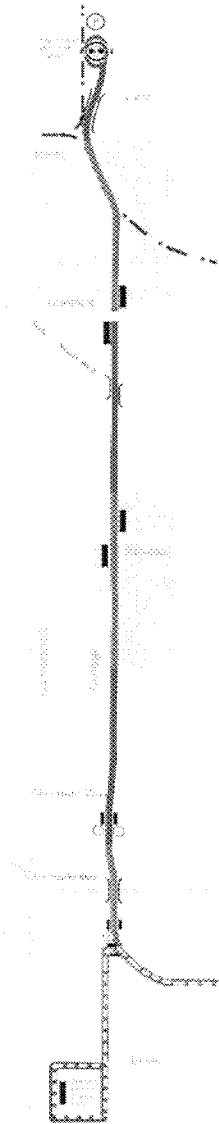


Roger Snoble
Chief Executive Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Canoga Transportation Corridor Study was initiated in May 2007 to identify how to build upon the success of the Metro Orange Line (MOL) with a north-south connection from the western end of the busway at the Canoga Station to the Chatsworth Metrolink Station four miles to the north. Initially, eight alternatives along three different corridors were considered. The MOL extension alternatives included on-street, mixed-flow operations and dedicated bus lanes on Topanga Canyon Boulevard, De Soto Avenue and Canoga Avenue. Public scoping meetings were held in July 2007 at which input on project alternatives was solicited. A Screening Report was completed in September 2007 which narrowed the range of alternatives for study in the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) to two build alternatives, a No Project and a Transportation Systems Management (TSM) Alternative.



The DEIR was publicly circulated between March 3 and April 16, 2008. Public input was received from many individuals and 10 public agencies. The letters from the public generally focused on which alternative or northern option was the author's preferred alternative. The largest number of comments related to the desire for sound walls along residential portions of the corridor and concerns about noise and/or fumes. Most of the public input was supportive of a transportation improvement in the Canoga Corridor, including the landscape and pedestrian/bikeway improvements. Only a few persons were opposed to the project, including a few businesses that might be impacted by it.

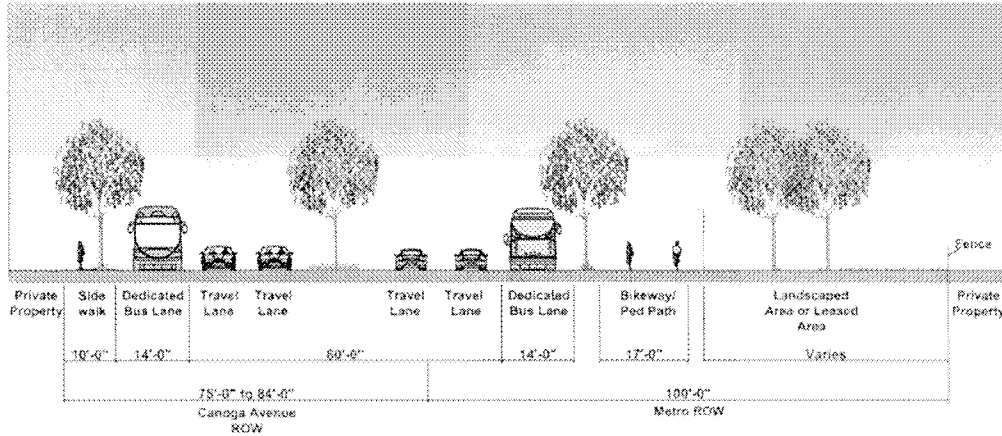
This Comparative Evaluation of Alternatives Report is intended to assist the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) Board in selecting a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the Canoga Transportation Corridor based on the environmental analysis and other evaluation criteria.

Alternatives Evaluated

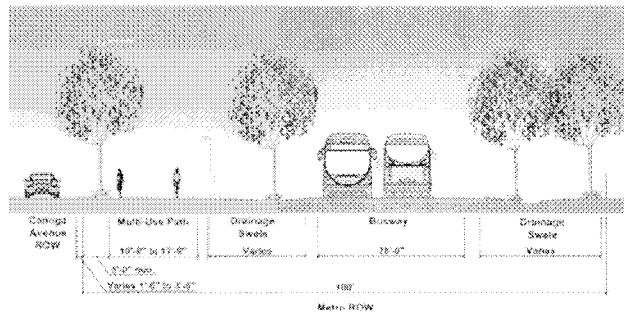
Three Project Alternatives were evaluated in addition to the 2030 No Project condition:

- Transportation Systems Management Alternative – addition of local bus service on Canoga Avenue and headway improvements to several existing Metro bus routes

- On-Street Dedicated Bus Lanes Alternative – widening of Canoga Avenue into the Metro-owned parallel former railroad right of way to provide dedicated bus-only lanes along the curbs and bicycle/pedestrian paths on the adjacent Metro right of way. The typical cross section for this alternative is illustrated below.



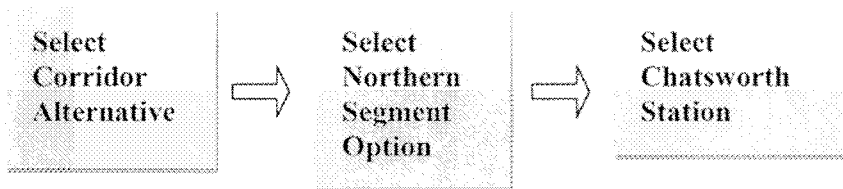
- Busway Alternative – extension of the MOL along the Metro-owned right of way with parallel bicycle/pedestrian paths similar to the existing MOL from North Hollywood to Canoga Station. The typical cross section for this alternative is illustrated below.



Locally Preferred Alternative

A corridor alternative (base LPA) is selected first. The northern segment options (how that corridor alternative will be connected to Lassen Street) are discussed and evaluated following the selection of the base LPA. Finally, the Chatsworth Station option that works best with the northern segment option is determined. This three step process is illustrated below.

A Three-Step LPA Selection Process



The Canoga Busway Alternative is the recommended LPA. It meets more of the goals and objectives (see table below) established for this corridor than the other alternatives. The Busway received strong public support, significantly more than any other alternative. It is less costly and more cost-effective than the On-Street Dedicated Bus Lanes Alternative. It provides aesthetic and landscape improvements along the corridor and provides the high-quality premium rapid bus service that has been successful on the MOL.

It also provides more safety (incident prevention) and certainty in terms of bus speeds and travel times into the future since buses are in a dedicated facility separate from autos.

| Project Alternatives Comparison | | | | |
|--|-------------------|------------|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| Goal/Objective | No Project | TSM | On-Street Dedicated Bus Lanes | Busway |
| Regional Connectivity | | | | ✓ |
| North-South Mobility | | | | ✓ |
| Land Use & Development | | | | ✓ |
| Community Input | | | | ✓ |
| Environmental Impacts | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Community Impacts | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Cost-Effectiveness | | | | ✓ |
| Total | | | | ✓ |

✓ Alternative which best meets projects goals and objectives
 Source: Iteris, 2008

The capital costs for the TSM Alternative include only the costs of additional buses, whereas the capital costs for the build alternatives includes the infrastructure and vehicle costs. The capital costs for the base (Option 1) alternatives are:

TSM: \$12.6 million (2007 dollars)

On-Street Dedicated Lanes Alternative: \$207.7 million (2007 dollars)

Busway Alternative: \$157.3 million (2007 dollars)

The On-Street Dedicated Lanes Alternative is more costly than the busway because Canoga Avenue would have to be widened and re-built as part of that alternative, in addition to the costs of the parallel bike and pedestrian pathways and landscaping, whereas the Busway leaves Canoga Avenue largely as is and most of the capital cost is spent within the Metro right-of-way.

The annualized capital and operating costs for the alternatives are described below in 2007 dollars. The TSM Alternative is lower in cost, but also results in less annual hours of travel time savings for riders.

| Cost-Effectiveness Calculation: Incremental Value Over No Project | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| Alternative | Annualized Capital Costs (2007 \$) | Annual O&M Cost (millions 2007 \$) | Annual Hours Saved (millions) |
| TSM | \$1.59 | \$15.33 | 0.08 |
| On-Street Dedicated Bus Lanes Alternative | \$56.43 | \$23.05 | 0.98 |
| Busway | \$33.42 | \$22.04 | 0.99 |

Source: Iteris, 2008

The Federal Transit Administration utilizes a factor called the cost-effectiveness index to compare transit projects around the country. The index is a measure of the cost to obtain an hour of travel time savings. The table below shows that the Busway Alternative is the most cost-effective alternative because it costs less than the On-Street Dedicated Lanes Alternative, while achieving slightly higher travel time savings and while it may be more expensive than the TSM Alternative, it results in much greater travel time savings.

| Cost-Effectiveness Index Calculation (Lower is Better) | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Build Alternative | Annualized Cost Per Hour Saved | |
| | Over No Project | Over TSM |
| TSM | \$ 211 | - |
| On-Street Dedicated Bus Lanes | \$ 81 | -\$130 |
| Busway | \$ 56 | -\$155 |

Source: Iteris, 2008

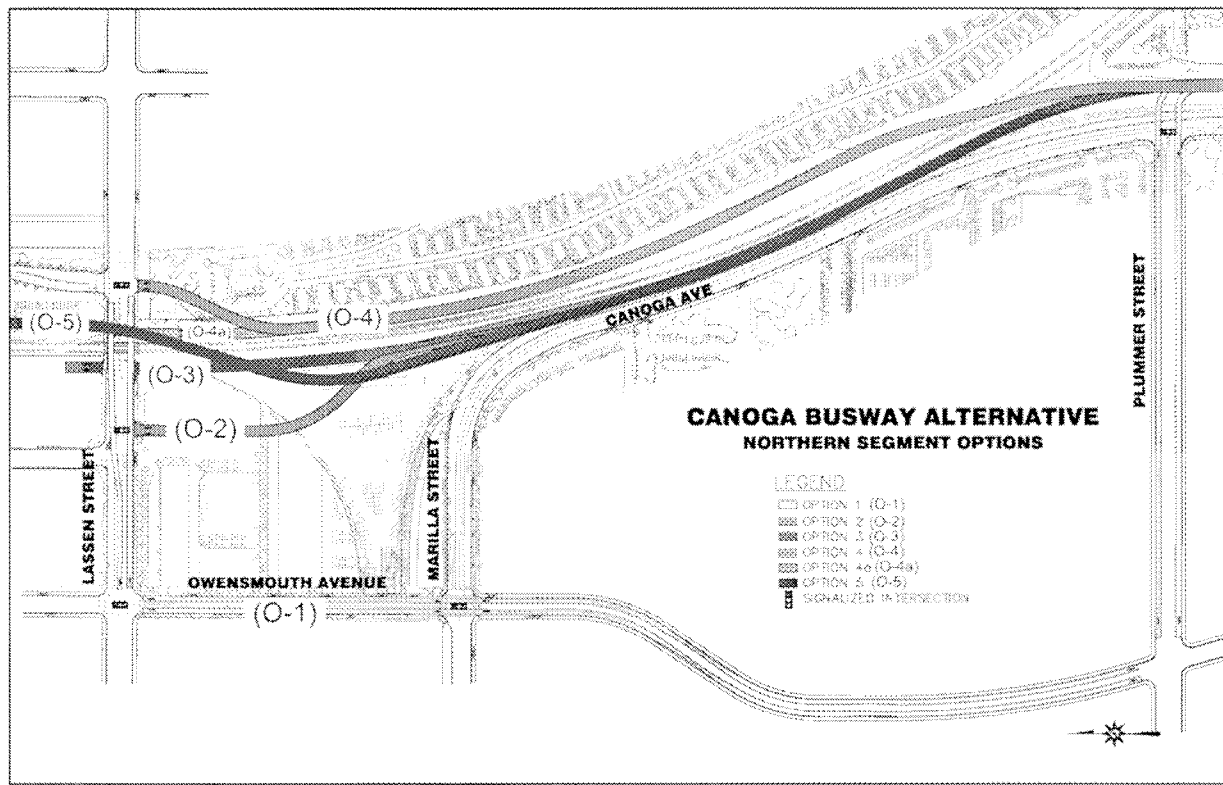
As seen on the table above, the Busway Alternative would be the most cost-effective alternative.

Northern Terminus Option 5 – Grade Separation into Chatsworth Metrolink Station is recommended as the LPA.

Five northern segment options were considered. These options are illustrated below.

Option 1 Busway Ends At Plummer - This has the lowest capital cost, but would also be the least safe and have the lowest bus operating speed, thus lengthening travel times and reducing the quality of MOL service. This option is opposed by the Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT), the Union Pacific Railroad Company (UP), the California Public Utilities Commission (PUC), and Metrolink, due to safety concerns with buses crossing the railroad tracks at grade. Conversion to LRT under this option would be very costly due to property acquisitions.

Option 2 At-Grade "T" Intersection on Lassen Approx. 200 Ft West of Tracks – This option would have relatively low costs (even though it requires property acquisitions) and is also one of the least safe and slower options. Conversion to LRT under this option would be very costly due to property acquisitions.



Option 3 At-Grade Parallel Crossing of Lassen West of Tracks – this option is a faster and safer option compared to Options 1 and 2; however, it would require the station be on the west side of the railroad tracks (private property to be acquired) and this would make the rail-bus interface less convenient for travelers. Furthermore, having the station on the west side of the tracks would make LRT conversion more difficult in the future. This option would require a new signal on Lassen Street at the busway’s crossing. This signal may require simultaneous railroad gate activation, causing additional traffic delays.

Option 4 Underpass of Tracks with Crossing of Lassen East of Tracks – These options are also faster and safer; however, they negatively impact the Sunburst Mobile Home Park, may be opposed by the UP railroad, and are difficult and costly to construct due to the undercrossing of the active rail tracks. Furthermore, this option would require a new signal on Lassen Street at the busway’s crossing. This signal may require simultaneous railroad gate activation, causing additional traffic delays. This option would have lower LRT conversion costs, as the necessary ROW would have already been secured.

Option 5 Elevated/Underground Grade Separation of Railroad Tracks and Lassen Street – this option would be the safest way to access the Metrolink station. Furthermore, no private property would have to be acquired for this option. However, the overpass version of this option could be opposed by some due to visual concerns. The underpass version would cost significantly more than the other options. The overpass version would not cost more than Options 4 and 3.

As stated above, Option 5 is recommended as the LPA.

Chatsworth Station

Given that Option 5 is the preferred northern segment option, Chatsworth Station Option D is the LPA.

The cost of the LPA is \$179.1 million in 2007 dollars.

Other Considerations

- An optional station at Parthenia was included in the DEIR. It is recommended that it not be included in the LPA because it would result in one-half mile station spacing, closer than desired on rapid bus service and would attract a small number of new riders (250 per day). It also increases the cost of the project by \$4.6 million (2007 dollars).
- The potential on-street, mixed-flow extension of MOL service north of the Chatsworth Metrolink Station to the SR-118 freeway was evaluated. It is not recommended because of the difficulty of locating a park-and-ride lot at SR-118, limited ridership forecast on the extension, congestion on the routes to the SR-118 which would slow bus travel times, and significant community opposition.

