



**Metro**

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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**

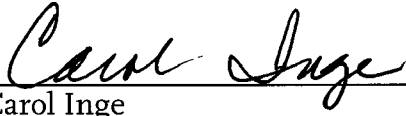
After the selection of the LPA, work will commence on the Canoga Transportation Corridor's FEIR and PE. This process will take approximately six months to complete and during this process, the project cost estimates will be refined. We anticipate returning to the Board in the winter to certify the FEIR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

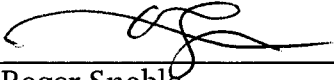
- A. Canoga Transportation Corridor Study Area
- B. Locally Preferred Alternative Report Executive Summary

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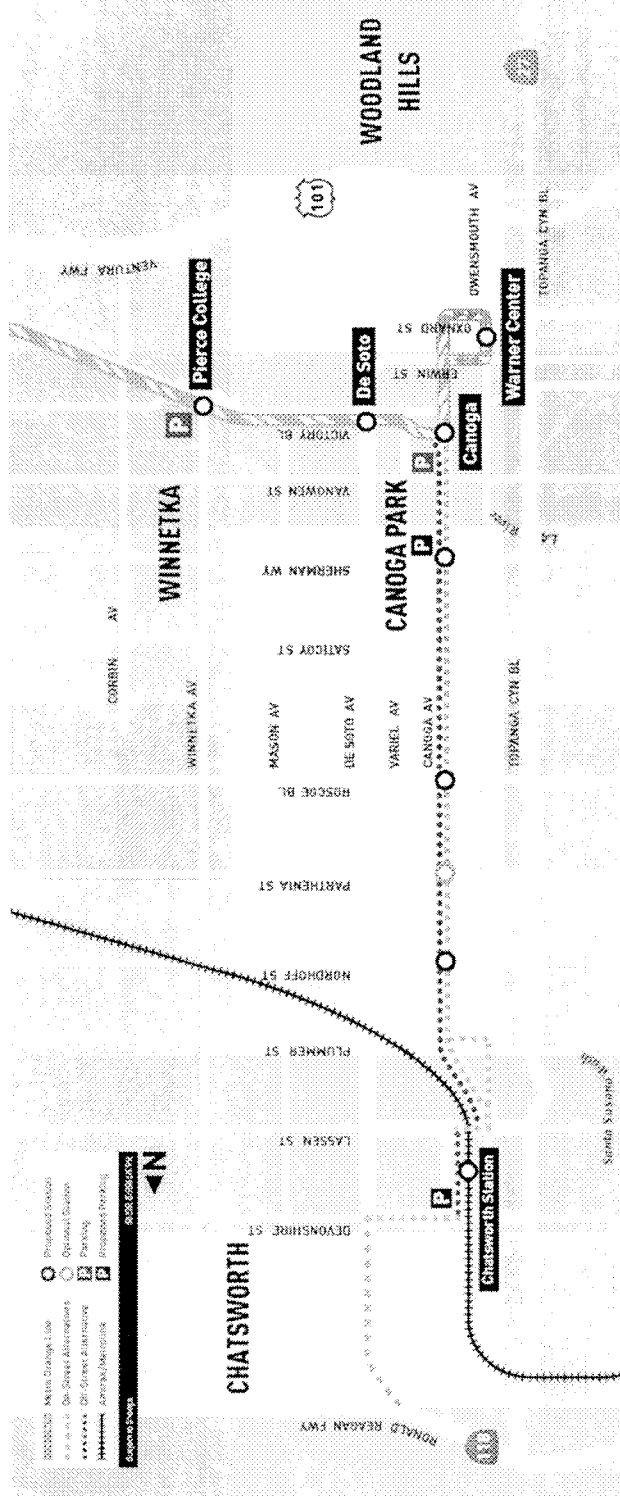
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# Canoga Transportation Corridor



ATTACHMENT A



