CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS
STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: May 13, 2009

To: Honorable Mayor & City Council

From: Aaron Kunz, Deputy Director of Transportation AK

Subject: Westside Subway Extension Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) Comment Letter

Attachments:
1. Comment Letter
2. Executive Summary – Mass Transit Committee

INTRODUCTION

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) has begun the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the Westside Subway Extension project. This memorandum provides a summary of the Draft EIS/EIR and transmits a staff comment letter regarding the scope of the document.

DISCUSSION

In January 2009, the Metro Board of Directors approved the Alternatives Analysis (AA) report for the Westside Extension Transit Corridor Study. The study area included a 38 square mile area extending from the Metro Rail Hollywood/Highland and Wilshire/Western Stations to the Pacific Ocean. The AA evaluated various rail alignments and transportation improvements within this corridor. The AA was completed in Winter 2009 and the Metro Board authorized two subway alignments to be studied in the Draft EIS/EIR:

1. Wilshire Boulevard Alignment Heavy Rail Transit (HRT) Subway: This alternative alignment would extend under Wilshire Boulevard within the City of Beverly Hills with stations at La Cienega Boulevard and Beverly Drive.

2. Wilshire/Santa Monica Boulevard Combined (HRT) Subway: This alternative would extend from the Hollywood/Highland station and connect to a station at La Cienega and Wilshire Boulevards as identified in Alternative #1.

Metro conducted public scoping meetings during April 2009. The preparation of the Draft EIS/EIR is anticipated to take approximately one year and will assess impacts of the subway alternatives both during construction and after operations. At the conclusion

of the Draft EIS/EIR, Metro will recommend a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) that will move the project forward into the final EIS/EIR process. The LPA will include the identification of a subway alignment(s) and initial project segments. Metro anticipates holding public hearings on a recommended LPA in Summer 2010 with the goal of the Metro Board adopting a LPA in Fall 2010.

To date, the City has not taken a formal position on the Westside Subway Extension. In 2006, the City Council appointed an 18 member "Mass Transit Committee" chaired by former Mayors Allan Alexander and Mark Egerman to:

> *"Develop recommendation to the City of Beverly Hills City Council regarding route alignments and station locations for a possible Westside Subway Extension within Beverly Hills."*

Attached you will find the Executive Summary of the Mass Transit Committee. The Committee unanimously acknowledged "the need and benefits of a Westside Subway Extension to serve the City of Beverly Hills." The Committee also recommended a Wilshire Boulevard alignment with two stations within Beverly Hills on Wilshire Boulevard at or near Beverly Drive and La Cienega Boulevard.

The legislative platform adopted by the prior City Council included promoting initiatives including "funding for Beverly Hills, the extension of the Westside 'Subway to the Sea' and the Westside Cities' regional priorities such as the Exposition light rail and the Robertson I-10 intersection."

FISCAL IMPACT

None

RECOMMENDATION

This report is for informational purposes.

FOR
David Gustavson
Approved By

Roderick J. Wood,City Manager

Mr. David Mieger, AICP
Project Director and DEO
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012

May 6, 2009

RE: Westside Subway Extension Draft EIS/EIR

Dear Mr. Mieger:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment early in the scoping process of the Westside Subway Extension Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIS/EIR). The City of Beverly Hills will actively participate in the Draft EIS/EIR process as the two subway alternatives identified as part of the Alternatives Analysis approved by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro Board) in January 2009, would travel through and have stations within the City of Beverly Hills as follows:

1. Wilshire Boulevard Alignment Heavy Rail Transit (HRT) Subway: This alternative alignment would extend under Wilshire Boulevard within the City of Beverly Hills with stations at La Cienega Boulevard and Beverly Drive. The City's citizen based Mass Transit Committee unanimously recommended this alignment including station locations in January 2007. The City of Beverly Hills City Council received the Committees' recommendations but has not taken a formal position pending the information from the EIR.

2. Wilshire/Santa Monica Boulevard Combined (HRT) Subway: This alternative would extend from the Hollywood/Highland station and connect to a station at La Cienega and Wilshire Boulevards as identified in Alternative #1. The City needs more information to assess this alternative.

Considering the density along the Wilshire Boulevard commercial corridor and the amount of commuter traffic throughout the day, the City would like to officially document the following concerns and issues to be addressed during the Draft EIS/EIR process:

3. Interface issue(s) associated with the possible connection of the Wilshire/Santa Monica Combined HRT with the Wilshire HRT at the Wilshire/La Cienega Boulevard station sit at a separate time frame:

   a. What will the construction impacts be at and surrounding the La Cienega/Wilshire Boulevard station?

b. How will the station initially be designed to accommodate transfers?

c. How will the tracks connect?

d. How will the station and tracks be configured to address the wide radius required to accommodate the curve?

e. Will there be "punch-out walls?"

4. Location of the construction staging area of all construction equipment (both commercial and heavy equipment) and duration of use.

5. Size and location of construction entrance at stations for soil excavation and duration of use.

6. Construction haul routing for equipment, soil removal, materials and feasibility of transporting soil "through the tunnels" and excavate at a location that has less impact to neighboring businesses.

7. Design, layout, and entry/exit portals of the station sites and necessary easements with the commercial entities.

8. Whether parking is to be provided at the proposed stations.

9. Parking demand and trip generation associated with the proposed stations.

10. Effects of stations on other transit (e.g. transfers, routing, headway, etc.).

11. Safety and sustainability of above-ground infrastructure/buildings (the City's Mass Transit Committee recommendation included a preference that the route at the west end of Beverly Hills continue under Wilshire Boulevard and veer southwest under Santa Monica Boulevard to Century City rather than under commercial and residential properties).

12. Safety and sustainability of underground drilling throughout the corridor and potential noise and vibration impacts.

13. Time required for street closures during station construction.

14. Traffic control and routing during planning and construction phases of the project.

15. Employee parking and staging, both within the Beverly Hills city limits and in neighboring jurisdictions.

16. Defined pedestrian safety routes.

17. Travel and parking impacts to local commercial and restaurant businesses along the entire construction corridor.

18. Cut-through traffic impacting residential streets.

19. Changes in bus travel times and frequency on Wilshire Boulevard, and possible diversion of bus routes through collector or local streets during construction.

20. The Wilshire/Santa Monica Combined HRT alternative also includes a station location in the Cedars-Sinai/Beverly Center Area. The aforementioned construction issues associated with a station in this location will be of interest to Beverly Hills.

21. Any additional demands on City infrastructure, utility, and public service impacts.

22. While economic issues are ordinarily outside of the purview of EIRs and EISs, the City requests that the Metropolitan Transportation Authority consider the following:

    a. Economic impacts during construction on City businesses and City tax receipts.

    b. Decreased city revenue due to lost new development opportunities.

    c. Long term economic benefits from operation.

    d. Is there an expectation of increased development density around stations?

The City of Beverly Hills may provide further comments as Phase 1 of the planning and development of the Westside Subway Extension Draft EIS/EIR process proceeds.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

RODERICK J. WOOD
City Manager

Cc: David Gustavson, Director of Public Works & Transportation
Susan Heely Keane, Director of Community Development

City of Beverly Hills
Mass Transit Committee

Final Report

January 2007

Committee Members

Chairs

Honorable Allan Alexander
Honorable Mark Egerman

Members

Mr. Michael Blumenfeld
Mr. Thomas Blumenthal
Ms. Nanette Cole
Mr. Howard Fisher
Mr. Ken Goldman
Mr. Alan Kaye
Ms. Hannah Kopelkin
Mr. Chris Laukenmann
Ms. Virginia Maas
Mr. Louis Milkowski
Mr. Bernie Nebenzahl
Mr. Jack Nourafshan
Honorable Vicki Reynolds
Mr. Joe Shooshani
Ms. Maggie Soleimani
Mr. Daniel Yukelson

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recognizing the growing traffic congestion issues and the growing social, economic and environmental cost of traffic congestion to the Westside of Los Angeles, the Westside Cities of Beverly Hills, Culver City, Santa Monica and West Hollywood prepared a "Westside Mobility Study" in October 2003. The study concluded, "Improvements to roadways and the existing transit systems will not solve traffic congestion problems or have enough impact to maintain the economic viability of the Westside." The Westside Mobility Study identified the Westside Subway Extension, along with the Exposition Light Rail Project and I-10/Robertson Boulevard interchange improvements, as the top three long-term transportation initiatives to address congestion.

Since that time support for a Westside Subway Extension has grown, resulting in the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) Board recently approving funding to begin planning studies for a subway extension. With renewed momentum for a Westside Subway Extension, Mayor Stephen P. Webb appointed former mayors Allan Alexander and Mark Egerman to chair a Beverly Hills citizen's Mass Transit Committee (MTC). The Committee was charged as follows:

> *Develop recommendations to the City of Beverly Hills City Council regarding route alignments and station locations for a possible Westside Subway Extension within Beverly Hills.*

While the Metro Board is the decision making body regarding route alignment and station locations, a successful project involves a collaborative effort between the cities along the potential subway route and Metro Board. The Committee was formed to provide input to the Beverly Hills City Council to assist the City Council in formulating its position regarding a preferred route alignment and station locations within the City of the Westside Subway Extension before Metro begins its formal planning process. The Committee has also identified and discussed in its deliberations issues relating to subway construction and operations to help prepare the City to participate in Metro's planning process.

Over a 7-month period, the Committee met 13 times, which included two tours of the existing Metro subway and construction facilities. The Committee met with experts from Metro, City staff, and private industry to gain a comprehensive understanding of issues relating to the planning, construction and operations of a subway extension. The City retained Kaku Associates, a transportation and engineering firm, as a consultant to the City and Committee, to facilitate the development of the Committee's recommendations.

The Committee unanimously makes the following recommendations to the Beverly Hills City Council:

- The Committee unanimously acknowledges the need and benefits of a Westside Subway Extension to serve the City of Beverly Hills.
- The Committee unanimously recommends a Wilshire Boulevard alignment extending west under Wilshire Boulevard from the existing station at Wilshire Boulevard and Western Avenue in Los Angeles through Beverly Hills to Century City and beyond, preferably with the alignment at the west end of Beverly Hills continuing under Wilshire Boulevard and then veering southwest under Santa Monica Boulevard to Century City rather than under commercial and residential properties.
- The Committee unanimously recommends two stations within the City of Beverly Hills, one located at or near Beverly Drive and Wilshire Boulevard at the west end of the City and the other located at or near La Cienega Boulevard and Wilshire Boulevard at the east end of the City.
- As part of its charge, the Committee unanimously determined that the recommended station locations appear feasible as to the construction of the stations and manageable with respect to operations, security and potential disruption during the construction phase.