



**CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS**  
**STAFF REPORT**

**Meeting Date:** September 4, 2007  
**To:** Honorable Mayor & City Council  
**From:** Aaron Kunz, Deputy Director of Transportation  
**Subject:** Proposed Public Outreach for Santa Monica Boulevard Improvement Options

**Attachments:**

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**INTRODUCTION**

This report outlines staff's proposal to retain Fehr & Peers Associates to facilitate a public outreach process and complete the technical traffic study in an effort to collect sufficient information for the community and the City Council to consider options for improvements to North Santa Monica Boulevard. The goal is to provide the City Council a series of alternative improvement scenarios that are developed using both technical evaluation methods and community input. Only after preferred transportation improvement methods are agreed to by the City Council will staff would move forward to form a project design team to prepare plans.

**BACKGROUND**

In Fall 2005, the City assumed ownership of North Santa Monica Boulevard from the State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). The road had been poorly maintained under Caltrans ownership and it became apparent that Caltrans would not invest in any level of improvements or even maintain the existing roadway properly. As part of the "relinquishment" of the roadway to the City, the State paid the City approximately \$4.3 million to improve the roadway.

In 2001, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority awarded the City received \$1.75 million in funding through their Call for Projects process. The award application assumed the additional lane could be added by extending the roadway by 5-feet within the existing right-of-way and restriping the entire roadway. The award of the grant does not obligate the City to widen Santa Monica Boulevard. Potentially, the grant could be amended to widen only a portion of the roadway.

Per a separate application for the 2007 Call for Projects, Metro is recommending an award of \$1.3 million for signal synchronization along north Santa Monica Boulevard. Funding is scheduled for FY 2009-10. The Metro Board postponed final approval of all 2007 Call for Project funding due to delays in approval of the State of California budget.

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## **DISCUSSION**

In the past ten years, significant improvement projects to Santa Monica Boulevard have been conducted by the City of West Hollywood to the east of the City and by the City of Los Angeles to the west. In addition to a technical evaluation, significant public outreach was conducted to facilitate the respective City Council selection of transportation improvement alternatives. For both of these projects a Committee was formed to develop recommendations for transportation improvements. Staff is recommending a similar approach for Beverly Hills, with the Traffic & Parking and Public Works Commissions jointly acting as this Committee which will develop recommendations.

As a first step in studying potential improvements to North Santa Monica Boulevard, the City Council awarded a \$50,000 agreement to Fehr & Peers Associates to prepare a preliminary traffic study. Fehr & Peers is one of the City's "on-call" transportation engineering consultants retained by the City through a competitive process to perform special transportation related projects. As part of the preliminary traffic study, Fehr & Peers reviewed transportation improvement options, including signal synchronization and intersection improvements. The preliminary traffic study consisted of developing a "synchro/simtraffic" model to analyze level of service (LOS) for various improvement options.

In order to provide the City Council with sufficient information to select transportation improvement options for Santa Monica Boulevard, staff recommends retaining Fehr & Peers Associates to facilitate public outreach and complete the traffic study with the following improvement alternatives:

- Intersection Improvements (e.g., protected left turns)
- Raised Medians
- Partial Widening in Westbound Direction
- Full Widening in Westbound Direction

The proposed scope of work to complete this effort is described below:

### ***Public Outreach***

Staff proposes a not-to-exceed budget of \$40,000 for Fehr & Peers Associates to facilitate the public outreach program.

First, Fehr & Peers Associates would prepare conceptual presentation drawings on an aerial strip map base with the transportation alternatives described above. The conceptual drawings will include right-of-way limits and proposed striping plan including lane widths as well as candidate intersection improvements (e.g., protected left turns).

Second, Fehr & Peers Associate will retain Cityworks Design as a subcontractor to provide public outreach and urban design expertise. The principal of Cityworks Design designed and facilitated public outreach for Santa Monica Boulevard improvements within the City of West Hollywood. The public outreach is proposed to include the following meetings to present alternatives and receive comments:

- Three Open Houses/Committee Meetings (proposed to be held in November and December) to be supplemented by additional community outreach initiatives sponsored directly by the City
- Up to two City Council meetings (proposed to be held in January)

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The conceptual drawings and background material will be presented including images of regional setting and history of Santa Monica Boulevard and summaries of key issues and opportunities. Prior to public outreach, staff will forward this material to the City Council at an informal meeting.

**Traffic Study**

A not-to-exceed budget of \$58,500 is estimated to complete the traffic study to analyze the transportation improvement alternatives. The proposed traffic study would include the following:

- PM Peak Hour Model
- AM Peak Hour Model
- Future Conditions Model – Future year projections would be developed from the three scenarios using a regional travel demand forecasting model as well as historical traffic volume growth along Santa Monica Boulevard.

Analysis of cut-through traffic - To analyze the potential of cut-through traffic implications of the improvement alternatives, new traffic counts would be taken at 16 locations along Carmelita and Elevado Avenues, including connecting streets, to estimate changes in traffic volume.

**RECOMMENDATION**

To facilitate City Council selection of a Santa Monica Boulevard improvement alternative, staff recommends retaining Fehr & Peers to conduct public outreach and complete the preparation of a Traffic Report for a total not-to-exceed amount of \$98,500. With City Council concurrence, staff will prepare a purchase order for City Council approval at the September 17, 2007 City Council meeting.



FOR David Gustavson

Approved By