

**Metro**Los Angeles County
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metro.net**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
JUNE 20, 2012****SUBJECT: VENICE METRO RAPID****ACTION: ADD TO METRO RAPID EXPANSION PROGRAM AND APPROVE
FUNDING****RECOMMENDATION**

Approve:

1. Adding the Venice Metro Rapid to the Metro Rapid Expansion Program; and
2. Allowing existing Metro Rapid Expansion Program funds to be used for capital improvements.

ISSUE

In September 2002, the Board adopted the Metro Rapid Expansion Program, which identified new Metro Rapid corridors for implementation and provided capital funding for bus signal priority and bus shelter construction. In June 2010, a new Metro Rapid service was introduced on Venice Boulevard between downtown Los Angeles and the City of Santa Monica. We are working with the City of Los Angeles to provide bus signal priority on Venice Boulevard to support the Venice Metro Rapid service. This new line was not part of the original Metro Rapid Expansion network and therefore, not included in the original approved funding plan. We estimate that \$7.0 million in unused federal and local funds will exist and are requesting Board authorization to add this line to the Metro Rapid Expansion Program. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has approved the use of federal grant funds for this additional line.

DISCUSSION

Launched in 2000, the Metro Rapid Program started as a demonstration program and consisted of two lines – one along Ventura Boulevard in the San Fernando Valley and the other along the Wilshire/Whittier Transit corridor. The program was created with the specific goal of reducing passenger travel times by 20%. Based on the success of the demonstration program, the Board adopted the Metro Rapid Expansion Program in September 2002, which identified new corridors and provided funding for

implementation countywide. Currently, 24 lines are operating with the last line scheduled to open by Torrance Transit in July 2012 (Attachment A).

Originally, all the expansion lines were funded with Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) and local matching funds. In 2008, FTA granted \$16.7 million in Section 5309 Very Small Starts (VSS) funds for capital improvements specific to the last eight expansion corridors, which is being matched with \$8.9 million in local funding. These corridors included: West Olympic, Central, Manchester, Atlantic, Garvey-Chavez, Torrance-Long Beach, South Sepulveda, and San Fernando Road.

In December 2010, two of these eight corridors, Central and Manchester, were cancelled as they did not meet the performance measure requirements of Metro Rapid lines. In order to meet the original scope approved by FTA for the VSS grant, we requested to substitute the funding for the two cancelled lines for a new Metro Rapid line on Venice Boulevard. Approximately \$7.0 million in federal VSS and local funds from the cancelled lines are available and can be applied to the new Venice Rapid. FTA has approved this substitution.

The new Venice Metro Rapid service was introduced in June 2010. Since the Venice Rapid was not part of the original approved funding plan, the new line was implemented without bus signal priority. We believe that the \$7.0 million will enable this capital improvement to be implemented on the corridor. Signal priority has proven to be a key component of the Metro Rapid Program and contributes to 1/3 of the passenger travel time savings. We are working with the City of Los Angeles to provide bus signal priority on Venice Boulevard to support the Venice Metro Rapid service.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

The addition of the Venice Metro Rapid corridor to the Metro Rapid Expansion Program will not have any adverse safety impacts for our employees and/or patrons.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The FY 2013 budget contains \$2.5 million for this project in Cost Center 0441 (Subsidies – Others), Project 405599. Since this is a multi-year project, it will be the responsibility of the cost center manager and the Executive Director, Countywide Planning for budgeting expenses in future years.

Impact to Budget

The total cost of the capital improvements on Venice is \$7.0 million, which consists of \$4.6 million in VSS Section 5309 grant funds and \$2.4 million in local matching funds. As these funds were earmarked for the Metro Rapid Expansion Program, they cannot be re-programmed to any other bus or rail operating or capital expenditures.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board could choose not to approve the addition of the Venice Metro Rapid corridor to the Metro Rapid Expansion Program nor use the remaining Very Small Starts grant balance to fund signal priority and shelters. We do not recommend these alternatives since the available federal funds cannot be reprogrammed to any other project. Additionally, implementation of signal priority along the Venice corridor will further improve passenger travel times and achieve some of the goals set forth in the original Metro Rapid Expansion Program.

NEXT STEPS

Upon Board approval, we will execute an amendment to an existing Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Los Angeles to design and install signal priority on the Venice Metro Rapid corridor.

ATTACHMENT

A. Map of Metro Rapid Network

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