



Metro

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

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**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 17, 2014**

SUBJECT: THE BLOC/METRO CONNECTION

**ACTION: AUTHORIZE NEGOTIATION OF JOINT DEVELOPMENT AND
FUNDING AGREEMENT AND RECIPROCAL EASEMENT
AGREEMENT; ESTABLISH A NEW CAPITAL PROJECT**

RECOMMENDATION

- A. Authorize the Chief Executive Officer to commence design, environmental review, and other planning activities for a proposed pedestrian passageway and new portal for the 7th Street/Metro Center Station (“The Bloc/Metro Connection”).
- B. Authorize the Chief Executive Officer to negotiate the applicable agreements with NREA-TRC 700 LLC, a Delaware limited liability company, ownership entity of The Bloc (Macy’s Shopping Center) (the “Owner”) or its designee and return to the Board for final approval of the agreements and the Life-of-Project budget.
- C. Establish a new capital project for the FY15 budget in the amount of \$400,000 for a portion of the cost of the proposed Bloc/Metro Connection.

ISSUE

The 7th Street/Metro Center Station (“the Station”) was constructed with several knock out panels (KOPs) to enable additional entrances to the Station that were not utilized at the time of construction of the Station. Until now, those KOPs have remained unused largely due to the lack of Metro’s control of the private property required to provide Station exits. The Owner purchased the property located south of 7th Street between Hope and Flower Streets (formerly known as “Macy’s Plaza”) in 2013 and is under construction on a major renovation of the building which has been branded “The Bloc.” The Bloc is located directly south of the 7th Street/Metro Center station box and is well positioned to connect to the Station via an existing KOP. The Owner has offered to work with Metro to activate the first KOP to allow an entrance to the Station from the south side of 7th street. The appropriate environmental clearances and Board approval of the agreements and a new capital project will be needed to move The Bloc/Metro Connection forward.

DISCUSSION

The Station is a critical hub in the Metro Rail system with more boardings and alightings than any other station. The Station currently has three entrances, all on the north side of the Station. This new portal would be the only entrance on the south of the Station and would minimize pedestrian crossings of 7th Street. The Expo Line Phase II is scheduled to open in January of 2016, and is anticipated to increase boardings and alightings significantly at the Station.

The Bloc/Metro Connection provides a unique opportunity to allow increased access to the Station at a lower cost than the typical construction cost of an additional portal. It allows Metro to integrate the system into the urban fabric and increase visibility to potential system users.

The Bloc includes retail amenities at one floor below grade, and will require construction of one additional stairway and elevator(s) to two floors below grade as well as the new portal to connect to the Metro Station mezzanine level. The construction necessary on Metro property would involve a 12 foot passageway connecting the Station through the KOP to The Bloc. In order to accommodate The Bloc/Metro Connection, the Project will eliminate approximately 3,000 square feet of leasable area within their property.

Conceptual plans have been prepared, but Metro staff desires to take the next steps in creating more detailed design plans and specifications to obtain a more detailed cost estimate to complete The Bloc/Metro Connection. Further, Metro will take the necessary reviews to obtain environmental clearance for the pedestrian connection. It is estimated this work will not exceed \$400,000.

Concurrently, staff will negotiate the applicable agreements needed to implement the Bloc/Metro Connection regarding the following issues:

1. Responsibility for all circulation improvements including vertical transportation from the entrance to the new portal, through The Bloc, as well as wayfinding signage for Metro patrons through The Bloc to the street.
2. Responsibility for all operations and maintenance costs of the vertical transportation elements within The Bloc.
3. Responsibility for the costs of opening the KOP and excavating the passageway connection under 7th street to The Bloc property line and operations and maintenance of the 12 foot passageway.
4. Easement rights through The Bloc for Metro patrons, and the cost, if any for these rights.

Metro will prepare a preliminary design of The Bloc/Metro Connection in order to arrive at a construction budget.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

There are no safety impacts as only environmental, design and other planning activities are proposed at this time.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

The estimated funding for The Bloc/Metro Connection to be incurred this fiscal year is \$400,000, to be added to the FY15 budget in cost center 4510 – Executive Office, Strategic Initiatives, line item 50316 – Professional Services, project 204025. We will come back to the Board at a subsequent meeting for approval of the Life-of-Project budget.

Impact to Budget

The source funds for The Bloc/Metro Connection will be from Prop C 10 percent funds, which are only eligible for Metrolink operating and capital expenses, park and ride, and transit station capital projects. These funds are not eligible for Metro bus and rail operating and capital expenditure. Once the budget is finalized and approved, the total impact to the budget will be determined prior to approval by the Board in a subsequent action.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board may choose not to move forward with the initial planning stages of The Bloc/Metro Connection. This is not recommended as The Bloc/Metro Connection is a cost-effective way to add egress capacity to an impacted station. In addition, The Bloc/Metro Connection which will provide critical insights for staff in long term planning and programming of connections into private properties adjacent to Metro rail stations. Successful completion of The Bloc/Metro Connection will be beneficial to Metro's bus and rail customers and promote the use of public transportation.

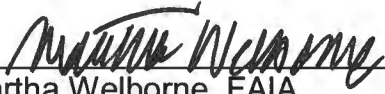
NEXT STEPS

Upon Board authorization, Metro will commence activities to obtain the necessary environmental clearance, refine the design of The Bloc/Metro connection, obtain a Life-of-Project budget estimate, and negotiate with the Owner, Staff will return to the Board for final approval of the agreements and a Life-of-Project Budget.

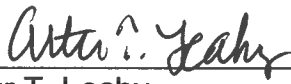
ATTACHMENTS

- A. Supporting map
- B. Preliminary design drawings

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ATTACHMENT A

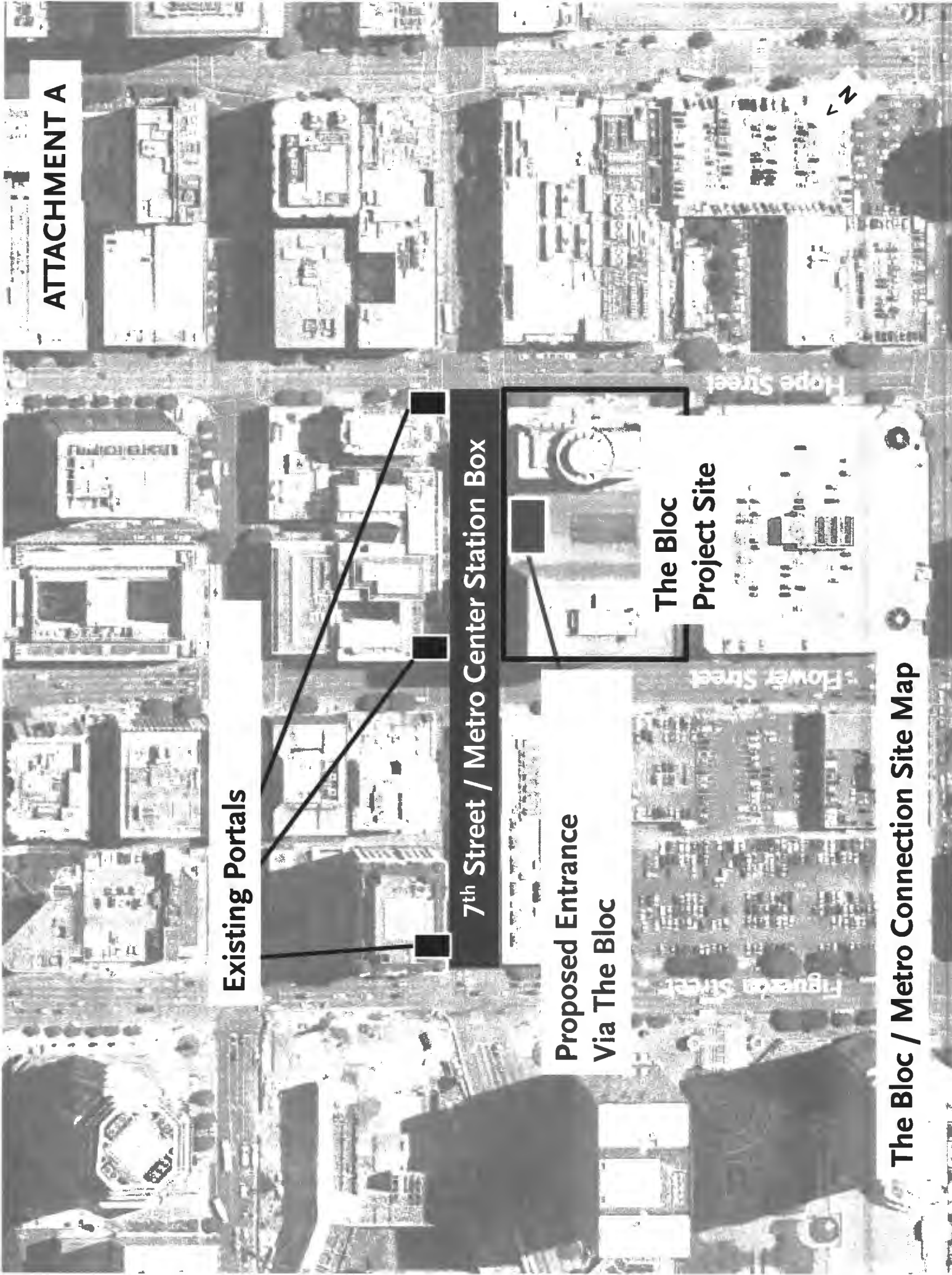
Existing Portals

7th Street / Metro Center Station Box

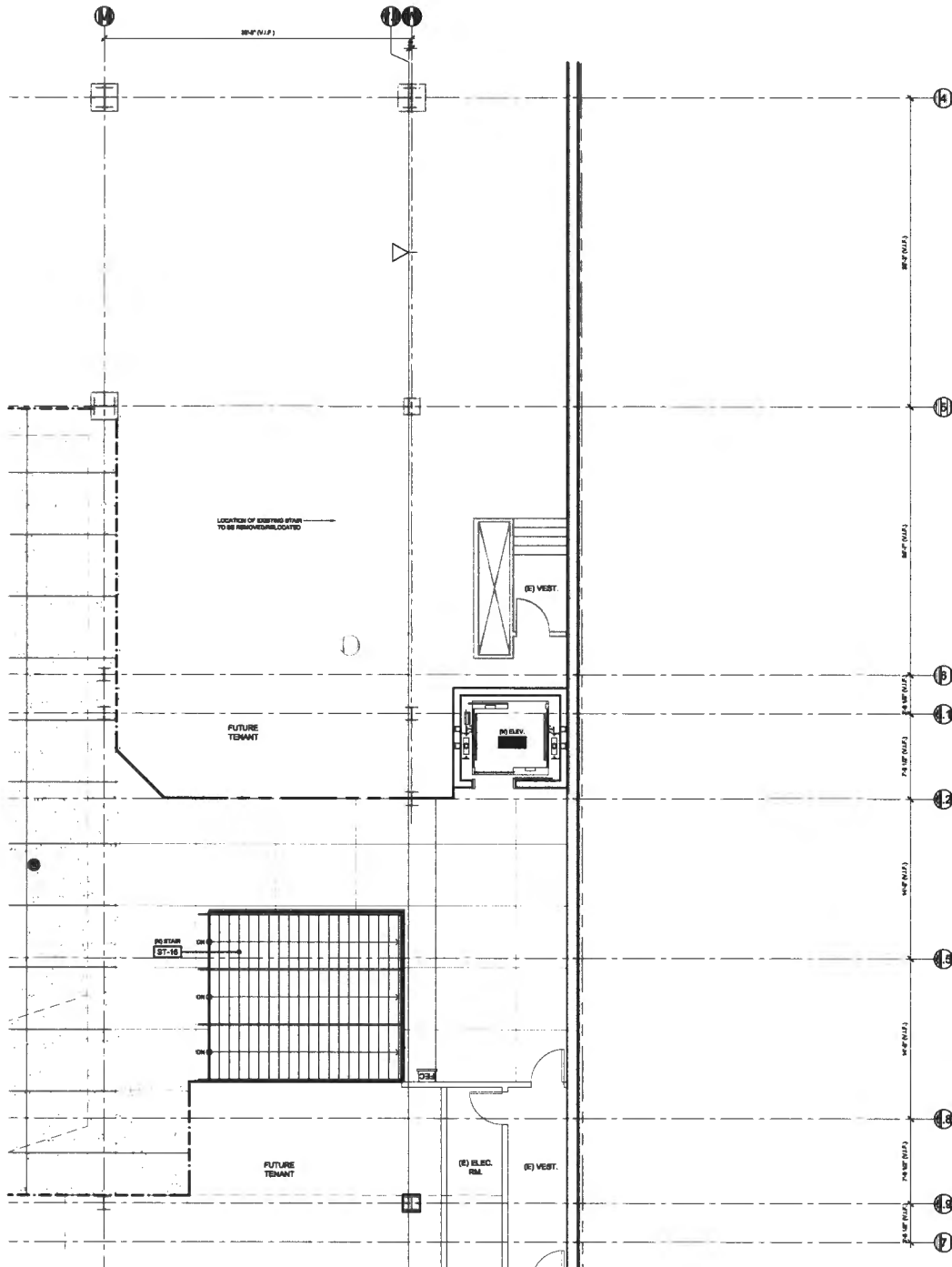
**Proposed Entrance
Via The Bloc**

**The Bloc
Project Site**

The Bloc / Metro Connection Site Map



ATTACHMENT B



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ENLARGED FLOOR PLAN - GROUND LEVEL

SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"

2014-08-28

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