SUBJECT: COUNTYWIDE BUS RAPID TRANSIT

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

Receive and file this status report on Countywide Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) activities including the advanced technical studies for the Vermont and North Hollywood to Pasadena corridors, as well as the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Symposium held on March 24, 2015.

ISSUE

At the July 24, 2014 meeting, the Board approved a motion (Attachment A) directing staff to begin advanced technical work on the Vermont and North Hollywood to Pasadena corridors as a result of recommendations from the Los Angeles County Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Street Design Improvement Study. This was further supported through a subsequent motion approved by the Board at the October 23, 2014 meeting (Attachment B). In November 2015, staff provided an update on the advanced technical work for these two corridors. Also in November, the Board directed staff to organize and host a BRT Symposium that would bring together national BRT experts to discuss opportunities and challenges related to BRT implementation in Los Angeles County with the two corridor’s local jurisdictions’ staff. This report updates the Board on the advanced technical work for the two corridors, as well as the BRT Symposium.

DISCUSSION

Background

In December 2013, staff completed the Los Angeles County BRT and Street Design Improvement Study. The purpose of the study was to develop recommendations for an effective countywide BRT system that includes dedicated peak period bus lanes and/or other general bus speed improvements. At the February 2014 Planning and
Programming Committee, staff presented the study findings and identified a final list of nine potential BRT candidate corridors. Staff also recommended moving forward with more detailed corridor level technical analysis of the nine corridors beginning with the Vermont and North Hollywood to Pasadena corridors.

Technical Studies

As directed by the Board, staff is in the procurement process for the two technical studies. Both contracts are anticipated for award in June 2015. Both the Vermont and North Hollywood to Pasadena technical studies will be conducted concurrently.

BRT Symposium

On March 24, 2015, staff hosted a BRT Symposium. The Symposium, which brought together nationwide BRT experts, provided participants with a thorough understanding of issues related to BRT system design, implementation, and an opportunity to discuss its wider applicability in Los Angeles County. Metro staff will provide an oral update on the Symposium at the Planning and Programming Committee meeting.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will continue with the consultant procurement process for the advanced technical work on both the Vermont and North Hollywood to Pasadena corridors.

ATTACHMENTS

A. July 24, 2014 Board Motion
B. October 23, 2014 Board Motion

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MOTION BY DIRECTORS MICHAEL ANTONOVICH, ARA NAJARIAN, MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS AND ERIC GARCEITI

July 24, 2014

After several years of evaluation, MTA staff developed a list of eligible corridors for additional bus rapid transit (BRT) projects based on, among other things, ridership potential and net savings of operations funding. Two of the corridors hit upon unmet transit needs, which would greatly relieve congestion and link major transit centers.

The first corridor, Vermont Avenue, has long been recognized as one of the most congested streets in Los Angeles. According to MTA statistics, the Vermont Avenue corridor has among the most daily bus boardings in all of LA County. The bus system is unable to accommodate commuter demands without service improvements.

The second corridor between the North Hollywood Red/Orange Lines and the Pasadena Gold Line, by all accounts, has huge ridership potential and would connect the San Fernando and San Gabriel Valleys. Metro, in collaboration with Bob Hope Airport, is providing an important plane-to-train connection through improvements to the Metrolink Antelope Valley and Ventura County Lines. The Airport recently opened its Regional Intermodal Transit Center that provides seamless connectivity from trains to buses to planes. An additional connection through enhanced BRT is warranted to increase mobility.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the CEO direct staff to advance these projects and provide the Board with a report back in September on an implementation plan to include:

A. Operations requirements
B. Funding requirements
C. Implementation timelines

I FURTHER MOVE that the CEO:

A. Immediately initiate the hiring process for the Bus Rapid Transit planning position included in the Board-approved MTA Fiscal Year 2014-15 budget
B. Dedicate additional staff to the aforementioned projects and the Countywide BRT Study as needed
MOTION BY DIRECTORS ARA NAJARIAN, GARCETTI AND ANTONOVICH

Construction Committee

October 16, 2014

At the July 24, 2014 board meeting, the MTA board approved moving both the Vermont Avenue BRT and the North Hollywood to Pasadena BRT to the environmental phase in preparation and anticipation of future funding. Board Chair, Mayor Garcetti, amended the motion to direct that both BRT's should be MTA's top priority for federal small starts funds.

At the board staff briefing this week, MTA staff stated that a consultant was being procured only for the Vermont Avenue BRT, in direct contrast to the board's direction that both BRT projects move forward in tandem to be positioned for small starts funding. To support this motion,

WE THEREFORE MOVE that the consultant procurement for BRT advancement be amended to include the North Hollywood to Pasadena BRT.