



Metro

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

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**LOS ANGELES COUNTY METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN INITIAL STUDY**

TO: AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS & INTERESTED PARTIES

SUBJECT: NOTICE OF PREPARATION (NOP) OF AN INITIAL STUDY (IS)

PROJECT TITLE: WILLOWBROOK/ROSA PARKS STATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

PROJECT LOCATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING: The Willowbrook/Rosa Parks Station Improvement Project (“Project”) proposes improvements to the Willowbrook/Rosa Parks Station (“Station”), which includes acquisition of station area property. The Station consists of the Metro Blue and Green light rail transit (LRT) lines and a major bus and shuttle depot.

The Project is located at the intersection of Interstate 105 (I-105) and South Wilmington Avenue in Willowbrook, an unincorporated community of Los Angeles County. The Project site is comprised of parcels that extend just north of the I-105 bounded by Imperial Highway, South Wilmington Avenue on the western edge, South Willowbrook Avenue on the eastern edge, and extending south to include approximately 1.25 acres of the Kenneth Hahn Plaza Shopping Center site.

The Station is surrounded by various land uses, including commercial, retail, institutional, educational, and residential uses. Commercial and retail uses are located in the immediate station area in the Kenneth Hahn Plaza and along adjacent major street corridors. Station area institutional uses are primarily medical in nature and include the Martin Luther King, Jr. Medical Center Campus (MLKMCC), National Institute of Urban Health, and other health clinics. The station area has a high number of education institutions including but not limited to the Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science (CDU), King Drew Medical Magnet High School, Lincoln Elementary School, and Barack Obama New Beginnings Charter School. The residential neighborhoods in the station area are primarily single family in nature with pockets of multi-family housing development.

The Project aims to better connect the more than 30,000 daily transit riders from the Station to nearby education, cultural, and recreational attractions. It will also improve connections to community resources such as health services, jobs, and training at the recently expanded MLKMCC and CDU; to better integrate with the adjacent Kenneth Hahn Plaza Shopping Center, and to serve as the “gateway” to the Willowbrook community. In addition, the Project would improve accessibility and increase safety for transit patrons, encourage alternative and non-motorized modes of travel, and enhance passenger experience, while increasing capacity to meet the expanding functional needs of the Metro bus and rail system.

The environmental review process will include preparation of an Initial Study (IS) in compliance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) statutes and guidelines. In compliance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), a Categorical Exclusion (CE) Category II(d) document will be prepared in the near future should Metro be awarded federal funds for this Project.

PROJECT INTITATION: The lead agency for the project is the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) in co-operation with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Los Angeles County Development Commission (LACDC). This notice shall alert interested parties to the preparation of the IS, describe the station area improvements, and invite agency comment on the scope of the IS.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT: The Station is a multimodal, multi-level station served by the Metro Blue Line, Metro Green Line, and six Metro and six municipal bus and community shuttle services, including Gardena Municipal Bus Line 5; DASH Watts; Lynwood Breeze Route D; The Link Willowbrook A and B; and the MLKMCC Shuttle. The Project is situated on properties owned by Caltrans and the LACDC, which is comprised of Metro right-of-way adjacent to and under the I-105 Freeway and Wilmington Avenue. The Station is located in the Willowbrook community, an economically-distressed area of unincorporated Los Angeles County, in which 98 percent of residents are minority and more than 32 percent have incomes that are below the poverty line.

The Station has been operating for 25 years and requires significant modernization and enhancement to improve its capacity to meet the growth in transit demand and the changing needs of the community. Much of the existing transit infrastructure has reached economic and functional obsolescence as a result of the increasing levels of patronage and over more than two decades of service life. Additionally, features typical to a “Gateway Station” are lacking, such as customer amenities, attractive pedestrian connections, modern bicycle infrastructure and enhancements, and elements that would support station area transit oriented development (TOD) opportunities being planned by the Los Angeles County Regional Planning Department.

Willowbrook/Rosa Parks Station Improvement Project Area



LEGEND

- Metro Blue Line
- Metro Green Line
- - - City/County Boundary
- Transit Station Improvements

With the planned extensions of Metro Green Line service to the South Bay, and the opening of new Metro rail lines including the Crenshaw/LAX Transit Corridor, Regional Connector, and Metro Purple Line extension, the Willowbrook/Rosa Parks Station will be part of an expanded rail system that will make available a wider range of regional employment, educational, and cultural opportunities for the low income and minority residents of the Willowbrook community.

IMPROVEMENTS: Proposed station improvements will physically integrate the Station with the Kenneth Hahn Plaza Shopping Center through access provided by reconfiguring it toward the shopping center, MLKMCC, CDU, and the surrounding Willowbrook community. Station improvements and elements include, but are not limited to:

- Acquisition of approximately 1.25 acres and demolition of a portion of Kenneth Hahn Plaza Shopping Center retail space.
- Construction of a new Customer Service Center.
- Construction of a new Metro/Sheriff's Substation Facility.
- Construction of a "Transit Hall" where the Metro Blue Line station extends under the I-105 freeway.
- Construction of a Transit Plaza, Mobility Hub, and new shuttle pavilion with potential amenities.
- Relocation and improvements to the station area bus bays to provide for more convenient bus-rail transfers.
- Construction of improvements and replacements to vertical circulation elements between the Metro Blue and Green Line platforms.
- Construction of a potential at-grade crossing to the extended Blue Line LRT platform.
- Metro Blue Line LRT right-of-way fencing.
- Construction of a two-level parking structure.
- Reconfiguration of existing parking lots to designate park and ride and drop-off areas, and circulation changes to optimize use of the site.

COMMENT DUE DATE: Metro would appreciate your comments, suggestions, or concerns regarding potential environmental impacts related to the proposed project. We would appreciate your comments by Wednesday, October 8, 2014.

PUBLIC MEETING: A public meeting and possible public hearing will be held during the 30-day public comment period upon completion of the IS; notification will be provided through a Notice of Availability (NOA).

ADDRESSES: Written or electronic comment should be sent to Ms. Susan Chivaranond, Project Manager, One Gateway Plaza, Mail Stop: 99-22-5, Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952, ChivaranondS@metro.net, 213-922-1259.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Susan Chivaranond, Project Manager, One Gateway Plaza, Mail Stop: 99-22-5, Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952, ChivaranondS@metro.net, 213-922-1259.