



Metro

July 20, 2012

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**THROUGH: ARTHUR T. LEAHY
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

**FROM: MARTHA WELBORNE, FAIA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COUNTYWIDE PLANNING**

SUBJECT: AIRPORT METRO CONNECTOR PROJECT

ISSUE

In April 2012, we presented the Alternatives for the Airport Metro Connector project that we intended to analyze further in environmental review to the Board. At that time, we were scheduled to begin preparation of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report (Draft EIS/EIR) in late Spring/early Summer 2012. Recent discussions with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) revealed that FAA is unable to initiate the federal (National Environmental Policy Act - NEPA) environmental review process at this time due to the fact that LAWA's Specific Plan Amendment Study (SPAS) has not been approved. This memo informs the Board that we are continuing our technical analysis of the four alternatives. We are also requesting a financial contribution from LAWA for our analysis of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) alternative which was added at their request.

DISCUSSION

In March 2011, the Board approved the preparation of the Alternatives Analysis (AA) and Draft EIS/EIR for the Metro Green Line to LAX project (renamed "Airport Metro Connector" in April 2012). During the preparation of the AA, we worked with the FTA and FAA to better understand how the joint EIS/EIR document would be prepared in compliance with NEPA and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Based on early discussions with both federal agencies, it was our understanding that FAA and FTA would serve as co-lead agencies for the NEPA environmental review (EIS) process, with us as the lead agency for the CEQA environmental review (EIR).

In April 2012, the Board received the final AA report. Following the April meeting, we met with FAA, FTA and LAWA to continue our coordination regarding each agency's roles and responsibilities for the environmental clearance. At this time, FAA stated they could not initiate the NEPA environmental review process until the airport completed the SPAS. Since all alternatives involve airport property, FAA jurisdiction over any alternative would require FAA approval. For this reason, FTA agreed not to initiate the federal environmental clearance process without FAA approval.

Specific Plan Amendment Study

The SPAS process is intended to resolve the plan for certain projects defined in the LAX Master Plan. The completion of the SPAS was a condition of the January 2005 legal settlement between LAWA and several parties, including the Cities of Los Angeles, El Segundo, Inglewood, and Culver City as well as the County of Los Angeles. Two Automated People Mover (APM) projects were included in the current LAX Master Plan and LAWA is exploring in the SPAS if and how an APM system should be included in an update to its Master Plan. LAWA is scheduled to release the SPAS Draft EIR (for compliance with state CEQA requirements) later this month and anticipates completing the Final EIR in Summer 2013.

NEXT STEPS

We will continue to conduct the technical analyses necessary for eventual preparation of the Draft EIS/EIR, in coordination with LAWA.