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Metro

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
OCTOBER 18, 2012

SUBJECT: AIRPORT METRO CONNECTOR

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

Receive and file this report responding to the September 27, 2012 Board Motion directing staff to provide a report on accelerating the Airport Metro Connector project (Project) including a strategic implementation plan, recommended advocacy efforts, and our comments on Los Angeles World Airport's (LAWA) Specific Plan Amendment Study (SPAS).

ISSUE

On September 27, 2012, the Board approved a motion by Director Knabe directing the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to report back in October on what it would take to accelerate the Project, with or without Measure J, so that revenue operations would begin in 2018. The motion also requested an implementation strategy and advocacy efforts for coordinating with LAWA, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and other relevant agencies to streamline the environmental process and identify funding. Lastly, the motion requested a summary of MTA's comments on LAWA's SPAS environmental document. This report responds to the Board directive.

BACKGROUND

The 2009 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) reserves $200 million (2008$) in Measure R funds for the Project with a Revenue Operations Date of 2028. This date is contingent upon a financial contribution by LAWA.

In April 2012, the Board received the Alternatives Analysis Report for the Project, including the alternatives recommended for further evaluation in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Report (Draft EIS/R). Two of the alternatives involve extending Light Rail Transit (LRT) to the airport terminals while the other two options involve an Automated People Mover (APM) or Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system to connect the airport terminals with the future Metro Rail station near the corner of Aviation and

Century Boulevards. Attachment A shows the alternatives to be studied during the Draft EIS/R phase.

Following the April Board meeting, discussions with FAA, FTA and LAWA revealed that FAA was unable to initiate the federal environmental review process (EIS), as originally planned, until LAWA completed its evaluation of potential transit improvements in its SPAS. Since any transit connection to Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) involves the potential use of airport property, FAA will be a lead agency for the federal environmental process, in coordination with FTA. The Board was notified of the delay to the federal environmental review process in a memo dated July 20, 2012. Currently, we are conducting the technical analysis necessary to support the environmental document so that delays can be minimized as much as possible.

In terms of airport funding for the Project, the FAA determines the eligibility of projects proposed by U.S. airports. Several Board Members recently requested information on other airports in the U.S. that have constructed transit connections and specifically what funding sources were used. Information for seven U.S. airports was provided in a memo to the Board dated September 14, 2012.

Specific Plan Amendment Study (SPAS)

LAWA initiated the state environmental review process in 2010 and recently released the Draft EIR for public review and comment. The SPAS process is a condition of the January 2005 legal settlement between LAWA and several parties, including the cities of El Segundo, Inglewood and Culver City as well as the County of Los Angeles. The SPAS EIR is a program-level environmental process that examines several alternatives for airfield, terminal, and ground transportation improvements, including an APM or BRT system that would connect the LAX central terminal area to the future Metro Rail station near the intersection of Aviation and Century Boulevards. The Draft EIR can be found at www.laxspas.org. The Final EIR is scheduled to be completed in early 2013, with certification scheduled for Spring/Summer 2013.

Other Related Transit Projects

The Crenshaw/LAX project is scheduled to begin the final design/construction phase in 2013 with revenue service beginning in 2018. The Crenshaw project extends the Metro Rail system one mile closer to the airport and provides a new rail station at the intersection of Aviation and Century Boulevards, approximately two miles from the airport terminals.

The South Bay Metro Green Line Extension is scheduled to open in 2035 based on the LRTP. With Measure J, the South Bay Extension could open in 2020.

DISCUSSION

Project Implementation Timeline

Completion of the Project, in whatever form, is not likely by the 2018 opening of the Crenshaw/LAX line. With Measure J, however, construction could be underway by 2018, depending upon when FAA allows the project to enter the federal environmental clearance process and if additional funding (including LAWA contribution) is identified.

If the environmental clearance process is started in Summer 2013, the Draft EIS/R document could be released in early 2014 with completion of the Final EIS/EIR in late 2014/early 2015. Following the completion of the environmental process, the final design/construction phase is anticipated to take another four (4) to six (6) years (2016-2022) with revenue service beginning in 2022 or 2023. This schedule assumes the passage of Measure J, FAA approval to initiate the federal environmental process in 2013 and funding commitments from entities such as LAWA. Without Measure J, the majority of MTA's share of the Project's funding becomes available in 2023 with project completion scheduled for 2028, unless airport or other funding sources can maintain an earlier implementation schedule.

Strategic Implementation Framework

To meet an accelerated schedule, the strategic implementation framework should focus on three major milestones: (1) obtaining FAA's approval to initiate the federal environmental clearance process; (2) achieving consensus with LAWA for a comprehensive approach to ground transportation at LAX (i.e. a Locally Preferred Alternative) based on a thorough analysis of benefits and impacts; and (3) securing funding commitments by LAWA and other entities to support near-term implementation of the mutually agreed upon solution.

The timing of LAWA's commitment to any implementation plan may be affected by the status of the SPAS process. To the extent possible, we will continue working with LAWA, while they complete their SPAS, to better understand how various transit alternatives fit with existing and proposed development at LAX.

As the airport completes the SPAS, we will continue coordinating with both FAA and FTA in preparation for the start of the Project's federal environmental clearance process.

Recommended Advocacy Efforts

In order to secure federal transportation funds to accelerate the construction of the Project, our agency would partner with LAWA to identify and pursue appropriate sources of funds. This effort would include, but not be limited to, establishing a joint task force with LAWA to seek formula and grant funds from both the FAA and the FTA. These funds may include Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Discretionary Grant program funds, other surface transportation programs, and

airport-specific programs such as Passenger Facility Charges or Customer Facility Charges. To secure federal funds, our agency would work in close partnership with the federal and state officials who represent both the area in and around the Project and the region (given the regional importance of the project). Further, our agency would seek to secure the project's participation in the Obama Administration's "We Can't Wait Initiative," which was launched in 2011 to expedite project delivery through Executive Orders and administrative rulemaking. The "We Can't Wait Initiative" may serve to accelerate completion of this planned transit project. In addition, we may consider working with LAWA, FTA and FAA to establish a Memorandum of Understanding to clearly define the discreet roles and responsibilities with respect to the project's environmental reviews and to seek to accelerate the approval of these reviews by the relevant federal authorities and/or agencies.

Comments on the SPAS

We reviewed the Draft EIR for potential issues and impacts that could affect MTA's plans, programs, studies, current and future bus and rail operations including the future Project. A comment letter was prepared and sent to LAWA prior to the October 10th public comment deadline. We will report to the Board in October on the comments submitted.

NEXT STEPS

We will continue to conduct the technical analyses necessary for eventual preparation of the Draft EIS/R, in coordination with LAWA and other key stakeholders.

ATTACHMENTS

A. Alternatives to be Evaluated in Draft EIS/R

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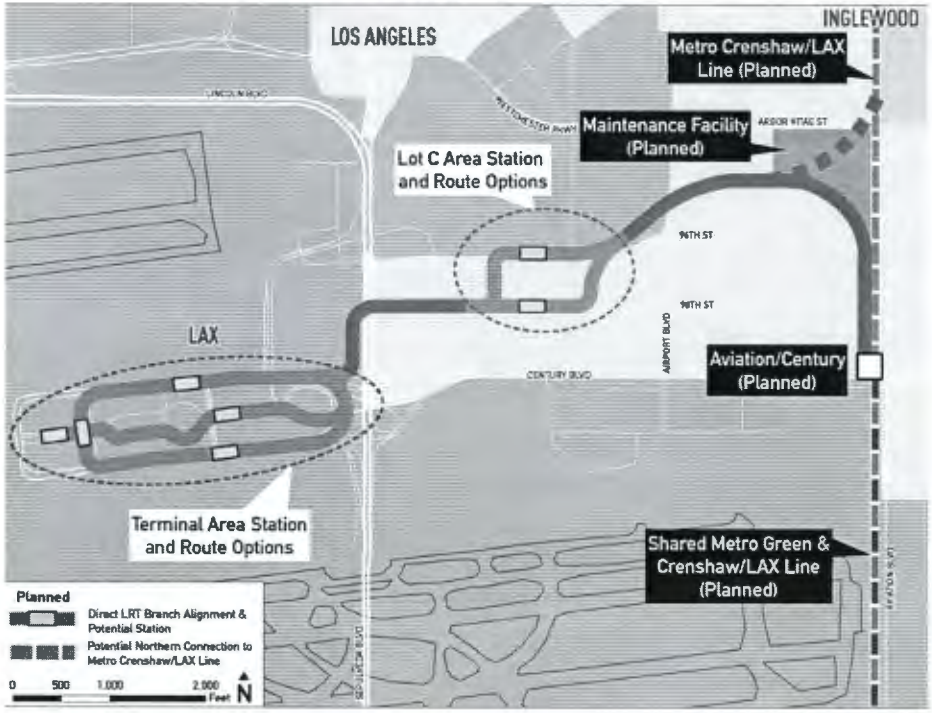
Alternatives to be Evaluated in Draft EIS/R

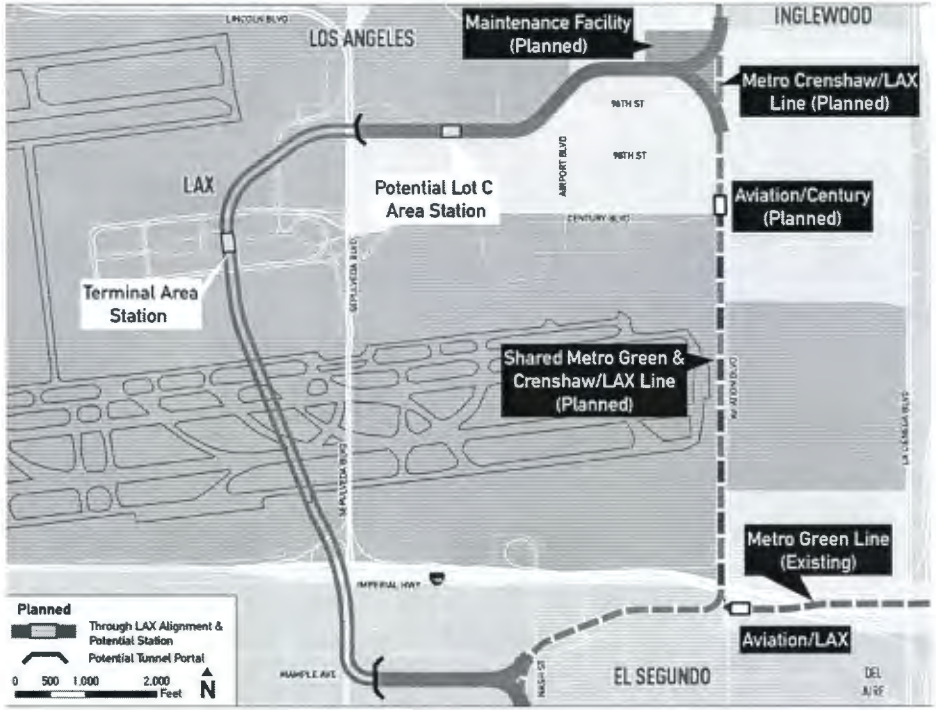
Attachment A

Direct LRT Branch



- Extends Metro Green Line to LAX terminals
- Crenshaw/LAX passengers transfer to Metro Green Line at Aviation/Century station
- Two or three stations in terminal area

Modified LRT Trunk (Through LAX)

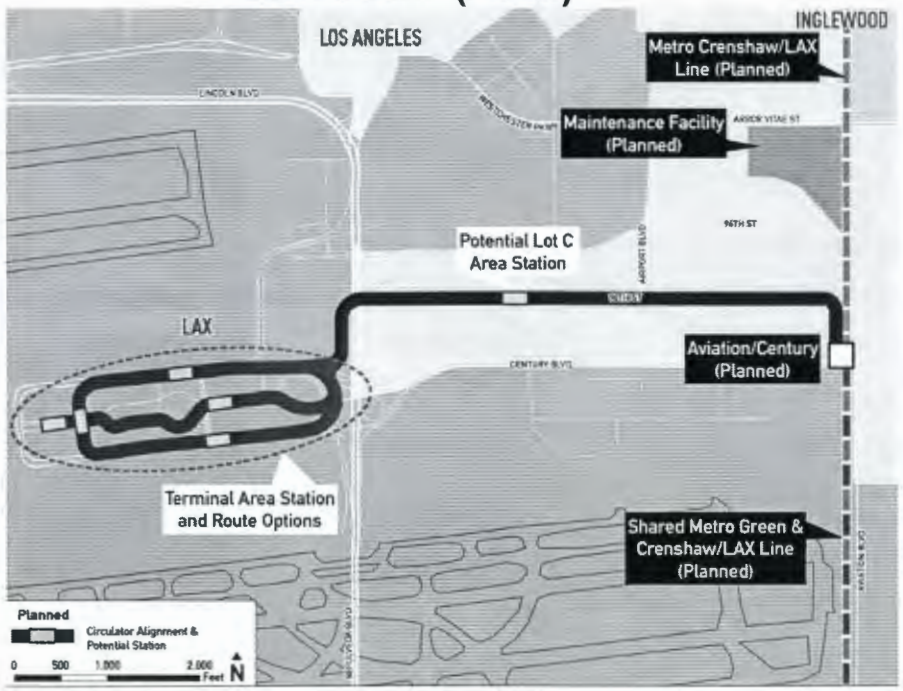


- Both Metro Green and Crenshaw/LAX Lines serve the LAX terminals
- One underground station in terminal area

Alternatives to be Evaluated in Draft EIS/R (Continued)

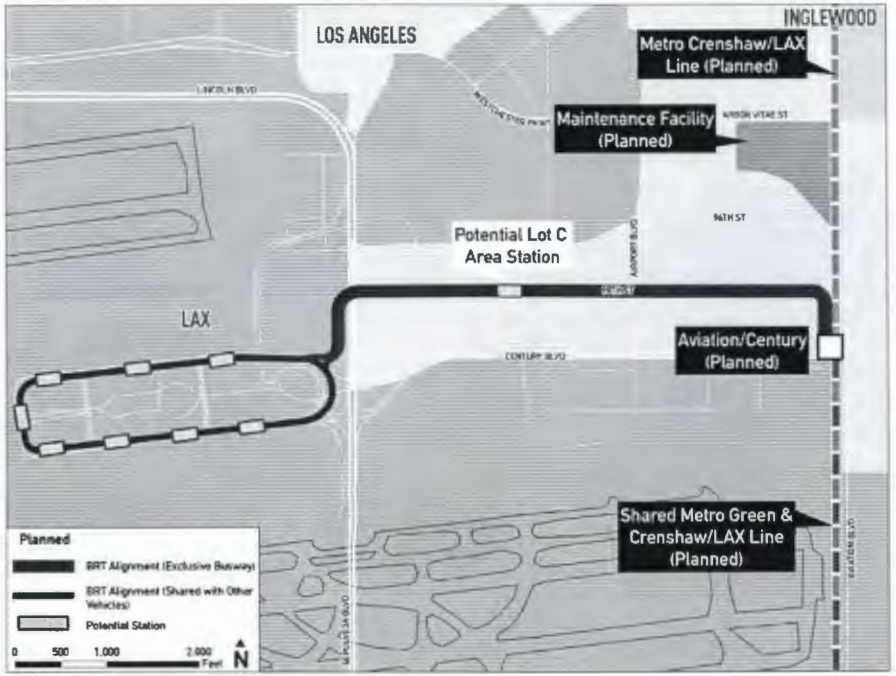
Attachment A

Circulator (APM)



- Metro Rail passengers transfer to APM system at Aviation/Century station
- Two or three stations in the terminal area

Circulator (BRT)



- Metro Rail passengers transfer to BRT system at Aviation/Century station
- BRT uses existing roadway in terminal area with stops at each terminal