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metro.net**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
JANUARY 16, 2013****SUBJECT: REGIONAL AIRPORT CONNECTIVITY PLAN****ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE****RECOMMENDATION**

Receive and file this report responding to the July 26, 2012 Board Motion directing staff to develop an Implementation Plan that addresses rail connections to five Southern California airports: Burbank Bob Hope (BUR), Long Beach (LGB), LA/Ontario International (ONT), Los Angeles International (LAX) and LA/Palmdale Regional (PMD).

ISSUE

On July 26, 2012, the Board approved a motion (Chair Antonovich) directing the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to prepare a Regional Airport Connectivity Plan (RACP) that would integrate our region's airports into our regional transportation system. The RACP incorporates a review of current and future transit options, input from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) on funding and support, a response from Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) on expediting construction of the Airport Metro Connector, and an overview of coordination and funding with partner agencies. Attachment A contains the RACP.

DISCUSSION**Approach**

The approach to developing the RACP is to set the foundation for continued efforts to improve airport connectivity. Staff reviewed the adopted Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), SCAG 2012 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS) and had discussions with various departments within our agency and with the airports' staff to gather information on other projects addressing ground access. From this, projects have been identified for each of the five airports and categorized into one of five phases: existing, approved (in implementation phase), environmental phase, LRTP constrained and other opportunities.

The RACP incorporates input from various external agencies and constituencies. Input was also gathered from each of the Service Sector Councils in September. Throughout this period we also consulted with SCAG staff and its Aviation Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) as well as with the airport authorities and FAA. Input received from these sources included updates on existing transit services and plans for future transit services, requirements for accessibility when transferring between airport terminals and rail stations, clarifications on current projects and their status, suggestions for how to connect key corridors, and information regarding new facilities such as parking structures and consolidated rental car facilities in various stages of development.

Coordination with SCAG is especially important, as SCAG has responsibility for regional planning for airports and associated airport ground access. It is thus important to build upon SCAG's efforts, especially as they relate to the comprehensive update of the Aviation Work Program and the Airport Ground Access Element being undertaken for the 2016 RTP/SCS. This will avoid duplication of work programs and initiatives.

Current Planning Efforts Affecting Airport Connectivity

Burbank Bob Hope (BUR)

BUR benefits from having two Metrolink corridors, the Antelope Valley and Ventura County Lines, within one mile of the airport. In addition, BUR provides van service through a contract with SuperShuttle to both the downtown Burbank Metrolink Station and the North Hollywood Station (for connections to the Metro Red Line and Metro Orange Line). Projects currently underway leverage existing Metrolink rail corridors to further improve rail transit connectivity with BUR. The Regional Intermodal Transportation Center (RITC) is being constructed by the airport and accommodates a bus transfer facility. In addition, the new Metrolink Hollywood Way Station and the Antelope Valley Line Infrastructure Improvement Strategy will also improve rail connectivity with BUR. Currently in the environmental phase is the California High-Speed Rail – Los Angeles to Palmdale corridor, with a station in the vicinity of Hollywood Way under consideration. Finally, new planning efforts, such as the airport authority's Ground Access Study and Metro's Countywide Bus Rapid Transit and Street Design Improvement Study (BRT/SDIS) may identify future opportunities. The Ground Access Study is the more definitive guide for ground transportation at BUR and is scheduled to begin in early 2013 and be completed in summer 2014. The findings of the BRT/SDIS are expected to be presented to the Board in Spring 2013.

Long Beach (LGB)

LGB has the farthest distance from the nearest rail transit line and station (Metro Blue Line Willow Station is 4.3 miles away) among all five airports. In addition, LGB has the lowest current passenger volume (3.0 million annual passengers) among the four operating airports and has a cap on the total number of daily flights (41) that restricts its future growth. Transit access to LGB is primarily by three local bus connections to the nearest existing rail stations and downtown Long Beach. Two of the routes operated by Long Beach Transit have low service frequencies in off-peak times (once an hour)

and do not operate on weekends. In 2013, Long Beach Transit will commence a new service, Route 176, that will also serve the LGB terminal. Given the distance of LGB to existing rail systems and the limitation on flights, the market to support rail service is limited.

LA/Ontario International (ONT)

ONT has several commuter rail lines with at least three rail stations nearby. There are three projects that would improve rail connectivity between ONT and the regional rail network. The San Bernardino Line Strategic Study is underway to identify infrastructure improvements that would improve service on the Metrolink San Bernardino Line and is scheduled to be completed in late 2013. The implementation of the Metro Gold Line Foothill Extensions 2A, 2B, and 2C would provide a direct rail connection between ONT and many parts of the San Gabriel Valley. Phase 2A is under construction and the other two phases are in various stages of planning with funding for construction yet to be determined. In addition, the current alignment of the California High Speed Rail – LA to San Diego Corridor would run adjacent to ONT and the California High Speed Rail Authority has undertaken an Initial Ontario Airport Study, which is examining the feasibility of locating a High Speed Rail station at ONT. The City of Ontario has been discussing the possible transfer of the airport with LAWA, the current owner/operator. The results of these discussions could impact future ground transportation strategies.

Los Angeles International (LAX)

LAX is currently connected by bus shuttles to the Metro Green Line and to the LAX City Bus Center located near Lot C and by three FlyAway bus services to regional destinations around Los Angeles County. The Metro Green Line connection is being improved by the Metro Crenshaw/LAX Line, which is scheduled for award of a design/build contract in 2013, with completion targeted for late 2018. Upon completion of the Metro Crenshaw/LAX Line, a new station located at the intersection of Aviation and Century Boulevards (Aviation/Century) will be 1.5 miles from the LAX Central Terminal Area (CTA) and will be connected to the CTA by bus. LAWA's Specific Plan Amendment Study (SPAS) and Metro's Airport Metro Connector project are concurrently exploring connections to the CTA from the Aviation/Century Station. MTA and LAWA are working together to develop mutually agreeable solutions at LAX. LAWA has identified three general areas (Crenshaw/LAX Aviation/Century Station, eastern edge of the Central Terminal Area (either at the site of their existing Administration Building or adjacent to Terminal 1, or an intermediate location near their proposed Intermodal Transfer Facility) for a potential connection between our light rail system and their proposed Automated People Mover (APM) system. We are continuing our technical work with LAWA to explore these locations. Attachment B contains the letter from LAWA.

LA/Palmdale Regional (PMD)

Access to PMD by rail is primarily by the Metrolink Antelope Valley Line, which lies three miles to the west of the airline terminals. There is currently no scheduled airline service at PMD. Improvements to transit at PMD primarily focus on regional and long-distance rail service. The Antelope Valley Line Infrastructure Improvement Strategy, with initial findings presented to the Board in March 2012, is being pursued to implement infrastructure improvements that would improve rail service, enhance safety, and reduce travel times on the Metrolink Antelope Valley Line. Two other projects are in the environmental phase. The California High Speed Rail – Los Angeles to Palmdale corridor is considering a station in the vicinity of the Metrolink Palmdale station. The High Desert Corridor project, currently in the draft environmental clearance phase, has alternatives that provide a high-speed rail connection to either or both the California High Speed Rail project/Metrolink and XpressWest, a proposed high-speed train service to Las Vegas. The draft environmental documents are scheduled for release in late 2013. Finally, the City of Palmdale is anticipated to assume ownership of the terminal and parking lots at PMD from LAWA (summer 2013). The City has expressed a desire to undertake a Ground Access Study, once the transfer is finalized.

Partner Agencies Coordination and Funding Efforts

SCAG

SCAG is the major partner in planning for ground transportation access to airports on a regional scale. SCAG is beginning an update to its RTP/SCS, which is scheduled for adoption in 2016. This will involve a major update to its Aviation Work Program, and especially to the Airport Ground Access Element, which reviews the existing ground access systems and identifies highway, arterial, local street and public transportation projects that have the potential to improve ground access to all airports in the region. To support this effort, SCAG will soon be forming an Aviation Subcommittee to its Transportation Committee to guide the Regional Aviation Work Program for the 2016 RTP. Among its technical efforts, SCAG will be updating their Airport Passenger Demand model which evaluates ground access needs at each of our region's airports. Staff will work closely with SCAG during the preparation of the 2016 RTP/SCS Airport Ground Access Element. We will also transmit to SCAG the RACP for potential incorporation into their effort.

Airport Authorities and FAA

Coordination with local airport authorities, with oversight by FAA, is required to advance projects and secure funding. Only airport owners can initiate decisions to move forward with projects on their property and to apply for authority to use airport-related funds. The use of airport-related funds such as the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) and Passenger Facility Charges (PFC) is overseen by FAA and is tightly defined by federal regulations. At a minimum, projects must be determined to support the capacity, safety,

or security of the affected airport. FAA will need to be consulted on a case-by-case basis as projects advance.

Report from LAWA

LAWA provided a letter explaining their efforts in support of its commitment to a robust connection between LAX and the Metro Rail system (Attachment B). LAWA is currently developing and will be adopting a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for their SPAS EIR in early 2013. Final action on the SPAS by the Board of Airport Commissioners, the City of Los Angeles Planning Commission, the Los Angeles City Council, and the County Airport Land Use Commission is anticipated by summer 2013. Representatives from LAWA are anticipated to be present at the January 24, 2013 Board meeting to provide further updates on the status of their efforts.

General Themes for Airport Ground Access Improvements

In considering the entire picture concerning ground access improvements at airports, the following should be considered:

- There is much work already underway on extending rail transit to airports and improving existing transit options in general (including both bus and rail). A number of projects, either directly related to airport connections or indirectly related, are already under construction or are in the environmental review phase, with various target completion dates. Other projects have been identified in strategic planning efforts. Planning studies are underway that may provide greater clarity on appropriate investments to serve regional airports and will be brought to the Board upon completion.
- The busiest airports with the highest number of flights and annual passengers demonstrate the strongest potential ridership for supporting the development of rail transit connections. There is a significant range of passenger volumes at airports. LAX has the highest at 61.8 million annual passengers (MAP). LGB has the lowest among operating airports at 3.0 MAP. PMD has no scheduled commercial flights operating now.
- There are changing institutional structures at a number of airports. Both ONT and PMD have been managed by LAWA as part of a regional airport system. At PMD, LAWA is in the process of transferring the facility to the City of Palmdale. Local governments within San Bernardino County near ONT are also advocating for a similar change in management. Changes in management present an opportunity to strategically re-assess the ground transportation access to these airports and to address changes in passenger volume that may result from the evolving roles of the airports.
- Partnerships have been key to advancing a number of projects that will improve airport connectivity. Partnerships have been developed and coordination among

agencies is already occurring between MTA and the Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport Authority on the BUR Ground Access Study, the Regional Intermodal Transportation Center (RITC) project, and the Metrolink Antelope Valley Line Hollywood Way Station. In addition, MTA and LAWA are working together to ensure provisions are in place for the Crenshaw/LAX Line for future ground access improvements to the LAX terminals and on the Airport Metro Connector project to bring rail into the terminals.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will work closely with SCAG during the preparation of the 2016 RTP/SCS Airport Ground Access Element. We will also be meeting with the various Councils of Governments (COGs) to obtain input on rail connectivity to the airports in their respective sub-regions. Furthermore, we will continue our partnership with the various airport authorities and cities as their respective Ground Access Studies and airport capital projects move forward. As the various studies progress, we will keep the Board updated. Additionally, recommendations generated from the studies will be considered, as appropriate, in future updates of the LRTP.

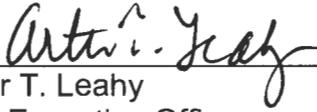
ATTACHMENTS

- A. Regional Airport Connectivity Plan
- B. Letter from LAWA

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