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Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation Authority

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**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 17, 2014**

SUBJECT: LOS ANGELES RIVER BIKEWAY CONNECTION

ACTION: AMEND FY15 BUDGET AND AUTHORIZE STUDY

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to:

- A. Amend the FY15 budget to add an additional \$100,000 to conduct feasibility study for the Los Angeles River Bikeway Connection

ISSUE

In June 2014, the Metro Board passed a motion directing the CEO to study the closure of a significant gap in the bicycle and pedestrian facilities located along the Los Angeles River and to: (a) develop a proposed scope for studying an in-channel bike path design, (b) recommend a project timeline and proposed implementation strategy, (c) identify and receive input from key stakeholders and study participants, (d) report back to the Board in September on items A-C and a possible recommendation, and (e) immediately initiate discussions with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) concerning any construction within the actual channel (Attachment A).

DISCUSSION

The City and County of Los Angeles have devoted significant time and resources in creating a Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan that would eventually revitalize all 51 miles of the river channel, and include bike and pedestrian facilities as a key element of accessibility and mobility. In May 2014, the USACE recommended approval of a \$1 billion proposal to restore habitat, widen the river, create wetlands, and provide pedestrian access points and bicycle paths along an 11-mile stretch of the Los Angeles River north of downtown through Elysian Park. The plan, however, does not include bike and pedestrian facilities for a significant 8-mile gap along the Los Angeles River, between Taylor Yard and the City of Maywood.

Staff anticipates a 9-12 month feasibility study to technically evaluate construction of an in-channel path within the Los Angeles River channel between Taylor Yard and City of Maywood. The study would require participation from key agencies including Metro, USACE, City of Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering (BOE), City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT), County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works (LADPW); and other key stakeholders and organizations.

A technical scope is currently being developed to address several core objectives:

- Evaluation of potential in-channel solutions to closing the 8-mile gap, including review of existing analyses, reports and conceptual designs,
- Identification of logical bike and pedestrian access points and access control measures; and safety, security, lighting and maintenance considerations,
- Preparation of necessary hydrologic and engineering analyses required by USACE and key stakeholders,
- Critical reviews by key agencies and stakeholders,
- Identification of required environmental clearances, permits and approvals,
- Preparation of detailed cost estimates, and
- Preparation of a Final Report

In order to encourage a high degree of involvement from key stakeholders, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) including representatives from key agencies and stakeholders is being formed to provide oversight and to ensure the most critical technical analyses are addressed. In order to immediately initiate discussions with the USACE, a letter signed by the CEO was sent to the 60th Commander of the Los Angeles District in August to request their participation in the study (Attachment B).

An initial coordination meeting with key stakeholders is being planned for September. The technical scope will be finalized after preliminary meetings with the TAC and after the TAC has had an opportunity to review and comment on the scope. We anticipate the technical scope will be finalized in the fall, and that a request for proposals would be ready for release to either the Planning or Engineering bench in winter 2014. Contract award is anticipated in early 2015. Staff would aim to return to the Board by fall 2015 with preliminary recommendations.

While this feasibility study will focus on addressing the gap in the Los Angeles River Path between the Taylor Yard and Maywood, other efforts are being made to address gaps in other parts of the river path.

Status of Los Angeles River-San Fernando Valley Bike Path Gap

The Board also requested an update on efforts to close bike path gaps in the San Fernando Valley. The completion of gaps in the Los Angeles River in the Valley, generally are within the boundaries of Owensmouth to Riverside, which is a distance of approximately 20 miles. Attachment C provides a summary table of the status and lead agencies responsible for completing bike path segments in the San Fernando Valley.

The City of Los Angeles applied for approximately \$5.4 million of funding to the current cycle of the California State Active Transportation Program (ATP) for constructing a project that would close a gap from Owensmouth to Mason, which would be at the headwaters of the western terminus of the Los Angeles River. The LA River Bike Path-Headwaters, Owensmouth/Mason project was previously recommended for funding through the 2011 Metro Call, but as Federal transportation funds shifted to the State, the City's only option was to reapply for funding. Although the State portion did not fund the

project in August, there is potential for the project to be funded through SCAG's share of ATP funds, which will be announced in September.

The County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works is currently preparing for the release of a Draft Preliminary Scoping Report (PSR), Los Angeles River Bike Path Project from Whitsett Avenue to Riverside Drive. This would help complete another gap that would extend the bike path west of Griffith Park. The PSR identifies the opportunities and constraints for route options, design alternatives, environmental work, construction costs and etc., which would assist the County to decide on further developing a Project Design Concept (PDC). The approval of a PDC would then support the implementation of the project.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

The Los Angeles River In-Channel Bike Path Feasibility Study will not have adverse safety impacts on our employees and patrons. A key element of the feasibility study will be to identify and assess any safety impacts related to construction and operation of an in-channel bike path.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The FY15 budget would need to be amended to add \$100,000 in cost center number 4320, under project number 405301, Bicycle Program. This amendment would augment the existing budget amount of \$200,000, in order to cover the estimated cost of the study. As this is a multi-year program, it will be the responsibility of the cost center manager and the Executive Director of Countywide Planning to budget funds in future years.

Impact to Budget

The source of funds for the Los Angeles River Bikeway Connection study are Propositions A and C and TDA Administration. These funds are not eligible for bus and rail capital or operating expenses.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board may choose to not authorize the proposed budget amendment of \$100,000 for the feasibility study. This alternative is not recommended as doing so would be contrary to the Board direction provided in June.


NEXT STEPS

Upon approval, we will work with the TAC to finalize a technical scope of work and identify critical issues. Once the technical scope has been completed an RFP can be released.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. June 2014 Motion: Los Angeles River Bikeway Connection
- B. CEO Letter to USACE Commander
- C. Status of LA River Bikeway Segments in the Valley

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Martha Welborne, FAIA
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Arthur T. Leahy
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PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE**MOTION BY:****MAYOR ERIC GARCETTI, SUPERVISOR GLORIA MOLINA,
AND DIRECTOR MIKE BONIN**

June 18, 2014

Los Angeles River Bikeway Connection

The City and County of Los Angeles have devoted significant time and resources in creating a Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan. This Plan incorporates transportation infrastructure as a key element of accessibility and mobility for the LA River, and addresses the need to have a regionally connected bikeway network. The County and many cities in the Los Angeles River Corridor, often with the assistance of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), have implemented major infrastructure and recreation areas along the river, its tributaries, and connecting surface streets.

In May 2014, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recommended approval of an ambitious, \$1-billion proposal to restore habitat, widen the river, create wetlands and provide pedestrian access points and bicycle paths along an 11-mile stretch of the LA River north of downtown through Elysian Park. This proposal, known as "Alternative 20," is the starting point for projects that will eventually revitalize all 51 miles of the river, from the San Fernando Valley to Long Beach.

However, the plan does not cover the most significant gap along the Los Angeles River, between the bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the Elysian Valley to the existing LA River Path that connects the City of Maywood to the City of Long Beach. This gap was also identified in MTA's Bicycle Transportation Strategic Plan adopted in 2006.

This gap is located in areas where the LA River is surrounded by active train tracks and industrial uses, which make it difficult to acquire the necessary right-of-way for placement of a bike path and pedestrian access on the river banks.

Recently a conceptual technical study was presented to MTA, which focuses on an "In River Channel Bike Path," similar to the bicycle path along the Arroyo Seco in the City of Los Angeles. As the Regional Transportation Planning Agency, MTA is best suited to coordinate regional, countywide bicycle efforts. A study of this nature will require multi-agency stakeholder coordination, and should include a detailed analysis of potential bicycle, pedestrian, and transit connections to the LA River facilities.

(CONTINUED)

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board direct the Chief Executive Officer to:

- A. Develop a proposed scope for studying an in-channel bike path design, with logical pedestrian linkages along ingress and egress areas, that connects the missing link from Taylor Yard to the City of Maywood;
- B. Recommend a project timeline and a proposed implementation strategy to advance a comprehensive bike channel study;
- C. Identify and receive input from key stakeholders and study participants;
- D. Report back to the Board in September 2014 on Items A - C and a possible recommendation for implementation.


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July 24, 2014

 Col. Kimberly M. Colloton, PMP
 60th Commander, Los Angeles District
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 915 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 930
 Los Angeles, CA 90017

SUBJECT: LA RIVER IN-CHANNEL BIKE PATH FEASIBILITY STUDY

Dear Col. Colloton,

I am writing you to request the participation of the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Los Angeles District in evaluating a conceptual plan for an in-channel bike path in the Los Angeles River that would close a significant gap in the LA River path. This request comes on the heels of the USACE LA River Ecosystem Restoration and Integrated Feasibility Report and the Corps' landmark recommendation to support a \$1 billion proposal to restore ecosystems and increase access along an 11-mile stretch of the LA River. The implementation of Alternative 20 will be truly transformative for the future of the LA River.

The County of Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), the City of Los Angeles and County of Los Angeles also recently demonstrated their support for closing an 8-mile gap in the regional bike network along the LA River, between Taylor Yard and the City of Maywood. To this end, the Metro Board directed staff to initiate a feasibility study to evaluate closing this gap and to initiate discussions with USACE regarding the potential for an in-channel path.

We respectfully request your agency's participation in a technical advisory committee role to provide oversight and identify specific technical analyses, to effectively evaluate how an in-channel bike path could be achieved while maintaining necessary flood damage reduction and safety protections.

The core study objectives would include: evaluating potential in-channel solutions to closing the 8-mile gap, identification of potential access and ingress points and access control measures, preparation of necessary hydrologic and engineering technical evaluations, critical reviews by key agencies and stakeholders, and identification of necessary steps to achieve critical clearances and approvals.

Thank you for your consideration and identification of representatives who could participate in this important study. If you have any questions related to the study please contact Eric Carlson at (213) 922-3052.

Sincerely,

 Arthur T. Leahy
 Chief Executive Officer

 cc: Mayor Eric Garcetti, City of Los Angeles
 Councilmember Mike Bonin, City of Los Angeles Supervisor
 Gloria Molina, County of Los Angeles
 Richard J. Leifield, USACE Chief, Engineering Division
 Terri Kaplan, USACE Chief, Asset Management Division
 Josephine Axt, USACE Chief, Planning Division
 Martha Welborne, Chief Planning Officer

STATUS OF LA RIVER BIKEWAY SEGMENTS IN THE VALLEY
(Owensmouth to Riverside, approximately 20 miles)

Segment	Status	Agency
Owensmouth to Mason	City of LA applying to ATP program; Partially designed by Bureau of Street Services; key connection needed to/from Metro Orange line over the river at Canoga	City of LA
Mason to Vanalden (south bank)	Mason to Winnetka complete; Winnetka to Vanalden is a greenway needing upgrade to bike path standards; signalization and connections improvements to and from this segment maybe needed	City of LA
Vanalden to Reseda (south bank)	In design, nearing completion by the Trust for Public Land, but needs funds and connections to/from area	City of LA
Reseda to White Oak (south bank)	Needs connections across Reseda Park (City facility), Victory, across Caballero Creek, across Lindley, and to Sepulveda Basin	City of LA
White Oak to Louise (north bank)	Path along the north bank between White Oak and Louise to Metro Orange Line bridge, which needs an underpass to connect to a planned City Prop. K project.	City of LA
Louise to Balboa (north bank)	Planned City Prop. K project (the river buffer portion of the Sepulveda Basin Sports Complex project) between the Orange Line bridge and Balboa on the north bank	City of LA
Balboa to Sepulveda (TBD)	Design and construction needed for all including connections	City of LA
Sepulveda to Kester (south bank)	In construction by the City	City of LA
Kester to Coldwater Canyon (south bank)	Design and construction needed for all including connections; ends in Studio City of City Prop K. path	City of LA
Coldwater Canyon to Whitsett	Requesting status from City of LA	City of LA
Whitsett to Riverside	County of LA developing draft project scoping report	County of LA