

**Motion by Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Mayor Eric Garcetti and Director
Jacquelyn Dupont-Walker**

**Implementation of a Pilot Business Solution Center for the Crenshaw/LAX Line
Relates to Item 79**

July 24, 2014

Since construction began on the Crenshaw/LAX Line Project (the Project) earlier this year, doing business on the Crenshaw Corridor (the Corridor) has become more challenging for businesses and patrons. Many businesses are already experiencing significant impacts created by construction activities, specifically at the intersections of Crenshaw Boulevard and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Exposition Boulevard where work is underway to lay the groundwork for future underground stations. Businesses between 48th Street and 60th Street, where the line will run at-grade, are also anticipated to face significant challenges when construction begins on that segment.

Under both Federal and State law, Metro is prevented from providing direct cash subsidies to businesses unless access to the business is denied due to construction impacts. While this has not technically been the case on the Corridor, there is a clear nexus between construction activities and reduced business activity, especially the walk-in traffic that many of the retail businesses rely on.

In April 2014, Metro retained a consultant to assess and provide recommendations on how to address the economic impacts of construction activities on small businesses on the Corridor. The consultant's report encourages the development of a pilot Business Solution Center that would provide direct sector-specific technical assistance to businesses along the Corridor to help them through construction activities. Services that could be provided to businesses include financial planning and advice on small business operations as well as dealing with municipal permits and regulations, legal assistance, marketing and grant/loan application management. The consultant specifically suggests that a pilot effort be established to provide proactive and hands-on business assistance to support the over 100 businesses at the at-grade portion of the

Project between 48th and 60th Streets, as well as a walk-in location along the Corridor for which businesses along the entire rail alignment can receive information, resources and referrals.

The establishment of a Business Solution Center would meaningfully enhance Metro's construction and external relations protocol. While serving as a relatively nominal financial investment for Metro, it would go a long way in helping to build the capacity of small businesses to survive the construction period and ultimately contribute to a vibrant transit corridor upon completion of the Line. If the Metro Board wants to pursue future funding measures to fully build out the system, it will be fundamental that we demonstrate to local small businesses that we are a committed partner during construction periods. This pilot Business Solution Center can serve as a model for such an effort, and to do so, it is essential that Metro partner with a capable and well established service provider to roll-out these services as quickly as possible. Furthermore, it is consistent with Metro's Construction Impact Response Program (CIRP) which was developed in response to construction on the Gold and Red Lines in the 1990s. The CIRP program provided various forms of relief for businesses including economic support and rapid response teams. These resources should also be made available for the Crenshaw Corridor.

The pilot Business Solution Center would also complement Metro's other ongoing efforts to address business' needs during construction. For example, Metro continues to modify construction signage based on the feedback of surrounding business' to highlight the names of businesses, parking locations and to clarify that businesses are open during construction. In addition, Metro is finalizing a communications strategy to promote an "Eat, Shop and Play Local" campaign during construction.

WE THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

1. Receive and file the "Recommendations for a Pilot Metro Business Solution Center";

2. Authorize the CEO to immediately solicit proposals to establish a Pilot Metro Business Services Center along the Crenshaw Corridor that includes a physical presence with consistent staffing hours for the duration of the construction of the Crenshaw/LAX Line, as well as a Business Solutions Outreach Strategy for the at-grade portion of the alignment on Crenshaw between 48th and 60th Streets and other locations that are determined to be significantly impacted by construction activities, and authorize the CEO to execute a contract with the most responsive and qualified bidder, with the objective of beginning operations by October 2014;
3. Direct the CEO to identify up to \$250,000 and amend the current budget to fund the initial year activities, with an overall project budget expected to be approximately \$1,000,000, to be included in future budgets for fiscal year 2016, 2017 and 2018 at \$250,000 per year;
4. Direct the CEO to report back in September on a plan to utilize existing Full-Time Equivalent position(s) to staff the Business Solutions Center.
5. Direct the CEO to incorporate the following elements into the Pilot Business Solution Center Program:
 - a. A single point-of-contact or case management approach for each business; and
 - b. A 72 hour quick response plan.
6. Direct the CEO to establish an additional mitigation menu and criteria based on MTA's previous Construction Impact Response Program that includes:
 - a. Marketing campaigns for impacted businesses;
 - b. Rent and mortgage subsidies to businesses;
 - c. A low-interest loan fund that is accessible to small and micro-businesses;
 - d. Report back to the Board in September with funding recommendations;
7. Direct the CEO to report back on a Post-Construction Façade Improvement Program in conjunction with the approved Design-Build Contract for the Crenshaw/LAX Transit Line;
8. Direct the CEO to report back on the feasibility of establishing Memorandums of Understanding with local business and community stakeholder groups, as has been

done in Denver, Colorado, to ensure that we are maximizing community involvement and engagement as it relates to construction activities;

9. Direct the Diversity and Economic Opportunity Department to manage and oversee the Business Solution Center Project; and
10. Provide quarterly updates to the Executive Management and Construction Committees on the Pilot Business Solution Center and the “Eat, Shop and Play Local” campaign beginning in September 2014.