



Board Report

File #: 2021-0235, **File Type:** Informational Report

Agenda Number: 10.

PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE JULY 14, 2021

SUBJECT: EXPO/CRENSHAW STATION FIRST/LAST MILE PLAN

ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION

ADOPT the Expo/Crenshaw First/Last Mile Plan (Attachment A).

ISSUE

The Expo/Crenshaw First/Last Mile Plan (Plan, Attachment A) presents a menu of potential streetscape improvements for the Expo/Crenshaw Station on the E Line (Expo) and forthcoming Crenshaw/LAX Line. The Plan's recommendations address enhancing safety, comfort, and access in the area surrounding the station. Metro staff conducted additional engagement during the month of May as directed by the Metro Board in March 2021. The plan includes a Supplement (Attachment C) incorporating this community feedback and detailing priority projects based on the level of community support.

Notwithstanding additional technical review and vetting of individual improvements that may be necessary, adopting the Plan would aid in future grant funding applications for implementation.

BACKGROUND

First/Last Mile (FLM) planning is part of Metro efforts to improve safety and access to transit, deriving from the 2016 Board Motion 14.1 direction to integrate FLM planning into new transit projects. In 2019, staff identified an opportunity to conduct a focused FLM plan in collaboration with other Transit Oriented Communities (TOC) efforts in the area, including the joint development partnership with LA County adjacent to the station.

The Plan differs slightly from previous Metro FLM plans, in that it focuses more closely on the area immediately proximate the station, utilizing ¼-mile and 1-mile radii for walking and biking projects, respectively. The Plan also recognizes and builds upon the prior planning work conducted in the area in anticipation of the Crenshaw/LAX Transit Project.

The planning process and outreach are detailed in the supporting documents to the Plan. The attached Supplement details outreach events conducted in May 2021 following Board direction to allow additional community input on Plan recommendations.

DISCUSSION

Findings

The Plan presents project ideas to improve safety, connectivity, and accessibility to people accessing the Expo/Crenshaw station by walking, biking, or other non-motorized transportation modes. Proposed projects are grouped along the Primary and Collector Pathway networks of streets leading riders to the station.

Key proposed improvements include elements to improve pedestrian and bicyclist comfort, safety, and connectivity in reaching the station. Comfort-oriented improvements include additional shade trees and pedestrian lighting, while safety improvements, such as enhanced crosswalks and bulb-outs, address pedestrian safety at crosswalks. Bicycle facilities, including protected bike lanes, are also recommended on key access streets where safe bicycling facilities are not present, noting that bicycle recommendations on three streets may necessitate travel lane reductions. Given community concern on these specific projects, the Supplement details additional public process and technical steps that would need to precede any implementation activities.

A full list of Pathways and recommended improvements is available in the Plan text, which is linked in the Executive Summary.

Process

Plan recommendations are the culmination of a focused outreach process, which began with a review of the recent existing planning work along the Crenshaw corridor, such as the 2016 Crenshaw Boulevard Streetscape Plan. In the winter of 2019, three roundtable meetings were held, with a local youth group, neighborhood council representatives, and bicycle and pedestrian advocates, to learn of local barriers and identify priorities for improvements. The team also held an interactive pop-up event in February 2020 and distributed an online survey through community partners to gather further input on desired treatment types and locations. Further review and coordination with City of Los Angeles staff took place in the Spring of 2020 to ensure the Plan's support of City active transportation priorities.

On March 25, 2021, the Board directed staff to conduct additional outreach in order to allow greater community participation and feedback. Staff held two virtual open houses in May 2021, with more than 80 community members attending across the two events. The events were promoted through email, social media, local community groups, and flyers distributed to residents in the station area. The workshops were structured to collect comments, questions, and feedback through breakout discussion groups. Participants also ranked their most-desired improvement types through a survey exercise, generating nearly 70 survey entries, and submitted written comments via email. The attached Supplement to the Plan details the community feedback collected from these workshops. This input informed the creation of a list of "priority projects" that are recommended for early implementation given their broad base of community support. Several projects have been identified as projects of concern and therefore are recommended for the City of Los Angeles to conduct further outreach and study before considering implementation. Note that this Plan is not subject to the FLM Guidelines, either generally related to project development steps, or specifically related to priority projects.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Adoption of the Expo/Crenshaw First/Last Mile Plan would have no financial impact to the agency.

Impact to Budget

The project recommendations within the Expo/Crenshaw First/Last Mile Plan are unfunded and would not carry a budgetary impact.

EQUITY PLATFORM

The Plan advances equity through the framework of the Equity Platform, specifically the Define and Measure, Listen and Learn, and Focus and Deliver pillars. An understanding of the area's existing conditions was informed through participation from stakeholders in multiple engagement opportunities and the use of key data. Development of the Plan involved stakeholder roundtables, a pop-up event, an online survey, and two virtual workshops. Comments and feedback from these events informed plan improvements and prioritization. The variety of engagement types were designed to solicit feedback from a wide set of residents with diverse relations to the station and station area. The Supplement responds to community concerns and interests captured through workshops.

The concept recommendations within the Plan would be highly beneficial to transit riders traveling on the E Line (Expo) and Crenshaw/LAX Transit Project by enhancing safety and comfort for those navigating to, from, and around a key transfer station. The Plan improves safety on two streets (Crenshaw and Jefferson Boulevards) identified in the City of Los Angeles High Injury Network (HIN). The HIN is the 6 percent of streets within the City that comprise 65 percent of its traffic fatalities and severe injuries from crashes involving people walking. The network is a key data indicator for the City's Vision Zero plan and aids in guiding strategic safety investments to address high-need, dangerous street corridors. In their current conditions, Jefferson and Crenshaw Blvds are multi-lane, high-speed commercial corridors that also serve as direct connections for riders reaching Expo/Crenshaw Station. Between 2010 and 2019, the date of most recent data, a total of 77 bicycle-involved crashes and 91 pedestrian crashes occurred within a half-mile of the station, including five fatal crashes. The Plan recommendations seek to add improvements such as protected bike lanes, enhanced crosswalks, curb extensions, and other streetscape upgrades that would improve safety by calming traffic and prioritizing space and crossings for people walking and biking.

These improvements would be most beneficial to community members who most commonly walk, bike, and ride transit in LA County. This includes younger residents, the elderly, people of color, and lower-income residents. The residents in neighborhoods comprising Expo/Crenshaw station area are predominantly Black and Latino, comprising 46 and 40 percent of residents, respectively, although higher-income households in portions of the station area suggest some residents of color are less likely to ride transit than other adjacent neighborhoods. In addition, about one-third of the station area includes Metro Equity-Focused Community census tract, in which residents are more likely to rely on transit: 58 percent of households make less than \$35,000 annually, and 22 percent do not have access to a car. By implementing Plan-proposed improvements, these residents will see safer, more comfortable, and more direct pathways to reach the station, improving their transit access and overall traffic safety.

The Plan recommends popular and frequently suggested improvement ideas from feedback heard throughout the development and engagement process, while workshops held in May elicited substantial concern from some residents with a focus on bike projects necessitating lane reductions and potential associated traffic impacts. This can be mitigated and addressed through the next steps as described elsewhere in the report.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

The recommended action has no direct safety impact. Projects recommended within the Plan will, when implemented, enhance safety for Metro riders walking and biking to and from Expo/Crenshaw Station and making transfers in the station area. These project types include treatments such as protected bike lanes, enhanced crosswalks, and corner bulb-outs.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Adoption of the Plan supports strategic plan goals #2 and #3. Following Initiative 2.2, Metro is committed to improving legibility, ease of use, and trip information on the transit system, first/last mile improvements enhance transit access and the experience of traveling to stations. Additionally, the Plan enhances communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity, specifically through Initiative 3.2: Metro will leverage its transit investments to catalyze transit-oriented communities and help stabilize neighborhoods where these investments are made.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board may choose to not adopt the Plan. This action is not recommended as it would hamper the ability of Metro and the City of Los Angeles to advance plan concepts to the next stage and potentially the ability to seek funding to implement certain safety and access improvements around this key transfer station.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will continue to work with City of Los Angeles to identify suitable funding opportunities for implementation of Plan-recommended projects. Applicable state and local funding sources include the State's Active Transportation Program and Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program, along with the Measure M Multi-Year Subregional Program (MSP). Additionally, staff will coordinate with the City of Los Angeles to discuss and address specific community interests and concerns captured in the Supplement. The Supplement stipulates specific activities for some plan projects including conducting further community outreach, investigating design alternatives as necessary, and developing additional transportation impact studies. These stipulations will be communicated to the City, and Metro may assist in carrying out these steps pending further discussion.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Expo/Crenshaw First/Last Mile Plan

Attachment B - Executive Summary

Attachment C - Supplement to the Expo/Crenshaw First/Last Mile Plan

Prepared by: Adam Russell, Transportation Associate I, (213) 922-1403

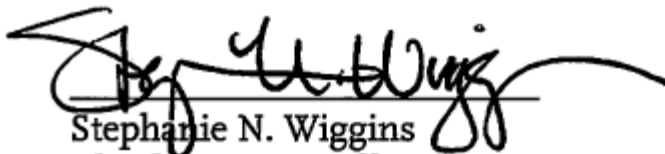
Jacob Lieb, Senior Director, Countywide Planning & Development, (213) 922-4132

Nick Saponara, EO, Countywide Planning & Development, (213) 922-4313

Holly Rockwell, SEO - Real Estate, Transit Oriented Communities and Transportation

Demand Management, (213) 922-5585

Reviewed by: James de la Loza, Chief Planning Officer, (213) 922-2920



Stephanie N. Wiggins
Chief Executive Officer