



Board Report

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**REVISED**  
**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE**  
**FEBRUARY 15, 2017**  
**CONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE**  
**FEBRUARY 16, 2017**

**SUBJECT: MOTION BY GARCETTI, HAHN, GARCIA AND DUPONT-WALKER (BLUE LINE IMPROVEMENTS)**

**Motion by:**

**MAYOR ERIC GARCETTI, SUPERVISOR JANICE HAHN, MAYOR ROBERT GARCIA, AND DIRECTOR JACQUELYN DUPONT-WALKER**

**Item 37: Blue Line Improvements**

With 80,000 average weekday boardings, the Blue Line is MTA's highest ridership light rail line and is the highest ridership modern light rail line in the United States. During 2016, the Blue Line saw nearly 25 million total boardings and over 186 million total passenger miles.

Currently, the Blue Line is undergoing a \$1.2 billion state-of-good repair overhaul, including over \$860 million in new and refurbished light rail vehicles. This project seeks to restore the Blue Line to a like-new state of operation.

However, a more comprehensive evaluation of improving service and reliability on the Blue Line is required. Customer satisfaction on the Blue Line has fallen nearly ten percent since 2013, while the Blue Line complaint rate has nearly doubled over the same time period.

There are many opportunities for improvement throughout the length of the Blue Line.

In Downtown Los Angeles, for example, a bottleneck exists at Washington Boulevard, where the Blue Line and Expo Line join in a wye. Recently, MTA increased the frequency of Expo Line trains to every six minutes during peak hours, matching the frequency of Blue Line trains. As a result, a total of 40 trains per hour are passing through the wye, approaching the limits of the wye's capacity.

Both Blue Line and Expo Line depend on this single track segment, any collision or mechanical failure within the segment could significantly delay both rail lines. Grade

separating this portion of the Blue and Expo Lines could dramatically improve service reliability, increase capacity, provide better schedule adherence, and facilitate other opportunities, such as undergrounding Pico Station.

Additionally, an opportunity exists to create Blue Line Express service between Long Beach and Downtown Los Angeles. Roughly between the I-710 freeway and Washington Boulevard, extra right-of-way exists which could be used to construct a third track required for express operation.

**APPROVE Motion by Garcetti, Hahn, Garcia and Dupont-Walker** that the MTA Board direct the CEO to:

- A. evaluate and implement short-term Blue Line and Expo Line improvements, especially service reliability and schedule adherence improvements on at-grade sections of Washington Boulevard, Flower Street, and the downtown wye, including but not limited to signal optimization, signal priority, signal preemption, and consideration of street closures;
- B. study long-term Blue Line improvements, including but not limited to:
  - 1. creating Blue Line Express service between Long Beach and Downtown Los Angeles during peak hours, including:
    - a. provide information on current freight usage along the right-of-way,
    - b. provide a preliminary estimate on upgrading the right-of-way to light rail transit standards,
    - c. provide an operations plan to accommodate express service,
    - d. quantify travel time savings for peak hour trains;
  - 2. optimizing the Washington Boulevard wye by grade separating the Blue Line on Washington Boulevard and the Expo Line on Flower Street, including a full grade separation of Pico Station;
  - 3. explore the feasibility for a full grade separation and/or station relocation including additional parking at Wardlow Station;
  - 4. study of additional grade separations along the entire Blue Line alignment that would improve service reliability and schedule adherence; and
- C. report back on all the above to the Construction Committee during the July 2017 Board cycle.

**DUPONT-WALKER AMENDMENT:** to extend to the Blue Line the graffiti deterrence program currently in effect on the Gold Line.

**GARCIA AMENDMENT:** to work with the City of Long Beach to reimagine the last stop on the Blue Line.

**GARCETTI AMENDMENT:** that the Eco-Rapid Transit Line Project studies incorporate the Blue Line Express concept, so the Blue Line could ultimately run directly to Union Station.