



**Board Report**

**File #:** 2025-0044, **File Type:** Project

**Agenda Number:** 9.

**PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE  
MARCH 19, 2025**

**SUBJECT: VERMONT TRANSIT CORRIDOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND PLANNING STUDY**

**ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATION**

**RECOMMENDATION**

CONSIDER:

- A. RECEIVING AND FILING the Vermont Transit Corridor environmental study findings as per Senate Bill 922 Statutory Exemption requirements;
- B. APPROVING the proposed Vermont Transit Corridor Project, a new 12.4-mile at-grade, side-running bus rapid transit (BRT) line with 26 stations at 13 intersection locations (Attachment A), as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA);
- C. APPROVING the finding that the Project is statutorily exempt from CEQA under Section 21080.25(b); and
- D. AUTHORIZING the Chief Executive Officer to file a CEQA Notice of Exemption (NOE) for the Project with the Los Angeles County Clerk and the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research.

**ISSUE**

The Vermont corridor is the busiest bus transit corridor in Los Angeles County with approximately 38,000 weekday boardings and serves several communities heavily dependent on public transit providing connectivity to four Metro rail lines, several east-west bus routes, and major activity centers.

The Vermont Transit Corridor Project (Project) brings long-awaited improvements in travel time, service reliability, and customer experience along a 12.4-mile stretch of Vermont Avenue between

Sunset Boulevard and 120th Street (Attachment B).

The Vermont Transit Corridor is a Measure M Project with an anticipated opening date as early as 2028, in time for the 2028 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games in Los Angeles. Critical to meeting this schedule, a Project and a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) must be identified, and the environmental review complete. The Project is statutorily exempt under CEQA through SB 922 and staff seek Board approval of this finding.

## **BACKGROUND**

In December 2013, Metro completed the Los Angeles County Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Street Design Improvement Study identifying Vermont as one of the top candidate corridors for BRT. At that time, Vermont was the second busiest bus corridor with approximately 45,000 daily boardings. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, systemwide ridership dropped significantly. However, the Vermont corridor today is the busiest bus corridor with 38,000 daily boardings, which are projected to increase to 66,000 by 2045.

The Vermont Transit Corridor has been under study for nearly a decade starting with the Vermont BRT Technical Study initiated in 2015 and completed in 2017. This was followed by the Vermont Transit Corridor Rail Conversion/Feasibility Study completed in 2019. Both studies examined potential BRT and rail alternatives for the corridor from Hollywood/Sunset Boulevards to 120th Street, where Metro's local and Rapid services on Vermont Avenue terminate and where Gardena Transit continues service. In June 2022, Metro implemented a community-based planning approach to engage with community partners and stakeholders to build a common vision for the corridor, listen to their transit needs and concerns, and incorporate their feedback into developing equitable mobility options for Vermont. Through the six months of extensive community outreach work with the CBOs, the community shared their desire for the following:

- Make immediate improvements to the existing bus service;
- Build a BRT line in the mid-term; and
- Deliver a rail project when funding becomes available longer-term.

As a result, in September 2022, the Board passed a motion (Attachment C) directing staff to advance a three-pronged strategy for immediate quick-build improvements, medium-term BRT, and long-term rail transit as funding becomes available. As part of the motion, the Board confirmed the limit of the transit improvements by directing staff to include an extension south of 120<sup>th</sup> Street in a list of Metro's future, strategic unfunded projects. Near-term improvements are being implemented through the Bus Speed and Reliability Program, which includes bus-only lanes in two areas of the Vermont corridor. To implement near-term improvements, existing and/or new extended weekday parking restrictions on Vermont Avenue between Sunset and Wilshire Boulevards will be implemented 7-10 a.m. and 3-7 p.m. Additionally, all-day bus-only lanes will be implemented between Gage Avenue and the Athens C Line Station. These improvements are underway, separate from the Vermont Transit Corridor Project, and are anticipated to be complete by Spring 2025.

In September 2023, the Board approved a contract award in support of developing a medium-term BRT, including consultant services for environmental clearance, design, and outreach. Work was initiated in November 2023 and included further evaluation of two initial bus lane configurations, end-to-end side-running bus lanes, and a combination side- and center-running bus lanes.

The 12.4-mile Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project features 26 stations at 13 locations (one on each side of the street) (Attachment A). The BRT Project extends from 120th Street (a discharge and layover

location), south of the Vermont/Athens Metro C Line Station, to Sunset Boulevard and a connection to the Vermont/Sunset Metro B Line Station in Hollywood. The study area encompasses several densely populated communities defined as Equity Focus Communities (EFCs) (Attachment D).

Most of the Study Area is within the City of Los Angeles and includes several communities, including East Hollywood/Los Feliz, University Park/Exposition Park, Koreatown, and South Los Angeles. Approximately 2.5 miles at the southern end (on the western side of Vermont Avenue only), the Study Area encompasses the West Athens and Westmont communities, which are in unincorporated Los Angeles County. These communities are among the most densely populated in the region and have a significantly higher percentage of transit-dependent residents. The corridor also features various cultural and institutional amenities as well as numerous major activity centers, including the University of Southern California (USC), BMO Stadium, the Exposition Park Museums, Kaiser Permanente Los Angeles Medical Center, Children's Hospital Los Angeles, and Los Angeles City College (LACC).

The Project seeks to enhance the existing north-south transit service for residents and businesses located west of the I-110 Harbor Freeway. Additionally, it aims to create opportunities for reinvestment in the communities along the corridor. The need for transit improvements along Vermont is highlighted through several key themes.

- **Growing Travel Market:** The high number of daily transit trips accessing or using the corridor is projected to increase over time from 38,000 daily riders today to 66,000 by 2045.
- **Deteriorating Traffic Conditions:** Segments of the corridor have constrained public rights-of-way, resulting in competition between modes, increased operating conflicts, inefficient movement of people, and decreased safety.
- **Degrading Transit Network Reliability:** Transit travel times, service quality, and service reliability are significantly impacted by traffic congestion in the corridor.
- **Inequitable Allocation of Resources:** The corridor has a disproportionately high number of transit-dependent riders. The entire corridor is within EFCs-resulting in disparate outcomes for those with the highest need when comparing service availability in corridors with a lower concentration of EFCs. Additionally, approximately one-third of the corridor's population resides within designated Federal Opportunity Zones.
- **Poor Safety and Customer Experience Conditions:** The poor condition or lack of transportation infrastructure (roadway, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian) near transit stops discourages riders. The Vermont Corridor is also on the City of Los Angeles' High Injury Network with more pedestrian incidents than any other street in LA over the last 10 years.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Project Goals**

The goals and objectives for the Project are summarized as follows:

- Advance a premium transit service that is more competitive with private auto travel
- Improve transit access to major activity and employment centers
- Enhance connectivity to Metro and other regional transit services
- Provide improved passenger comfort and convenience
- Improved safety on the corridor

### Stakeholder and Community Outreach

In addition to the community meetings required by SB 922, the Vermont Transit Corridor Project team has prioritized community engagement throughout Project development, achieving significant milestones and shaping its direction.

- **Cultural Needs and Equity Workshops** were conducted to ensure that the Project is responsive to the diverse communities along the corridor.
- **Station Design Workshops** provided a platform for residents and stakeholders to actively participate in shaping the design of future BRT stations. This collaborative approach ensured that station designs were functional, accessible, and integrated well with the surrounding neighborhoods.
- **Surveys** at key stops along Vermont Avenue and on Bus Lines 204 and 754 were completed with 371 transit riders who provided feedback on their experience and preferences for improvements along the corridor.
- **Ongoing Project updates** through various channels staff have kept the public informed about the Project's progress, critical decisions, and upcoming opportunities for engagement. This transparency has maintained community awareness and has reinforced its crucial role in shaping the future of the Vermont Transit Corridor. Engagement activities have included sharing information at 25 community events (5 CicLAVias, Leimert Park Jazz Festival, Honduran Business Fair, and several others), 22 briefings at key institutions, block clubs, and community groups located along Vermont Avenue, and presented to 22 neighborhood councils, block clubs, and community groups.

A robust Partnership Program was also implemented with 38 Community-, Community Development- or Faith-Based Organizations with deep roots in the corridor communities the Project will serve. The partnerships have allowed Metro to reach a wider audience and gain valuable insights from stakeholders who do not typically engage with Metro's planning processes, including reaching out to over 24,300 community members. Staff also conducted three rounds of community meetings as well as an additional five public meetings in early December 2024 to present the SB 922 analysis/reports and solicit comments. Attachment E includes a summary of the community engagement activities and comments received.

### BRT Alternatives Considered

Based on the work done as part of the two earlier BRT studies in 2017 and 2019, two alternatives were brought forward as part of the Vermont Transit Corridor Planning and Environmental Study - an

all-day end-to-end side-running and an all-day combination side- and median-running BRT. Given the right-of-way constraints on Vermont Avenue, the majority (2/3) of the corridor north of Gage Avenue cannot physically accommodate median-running BRT and stations. After further analysis of the two alternatives and all the feedback received, the end-to-end side-running BRT alternative emerged as the best performing option. Additionally, 63% of those who commented preferred the side-running alternative well only 37% preferred the combination side- and median-running alternative.

The benefits of the end-to-end side-running BRT alternative outweigh the benefits of the combination side- and median-running BRT. Some of the advantages of the side-running alternative include:

- Preservation of more on-street parking (94%) versus the combination side and median-running alternative (77%), which was a key concern heard from the community and businesses;
- Shared bus lanes and BRT stations with local buses (Metro and DASH), thereby providing more BRT benefits to more riders;
- Access to stations from the sidewalk was preferred by the community as walking to/from stations in the middle of Vermont Avenue was perceived as being less safe from the perspective of user experience;
- Preservation of trees in the median valued by the community (total of 11 trees at two station locations);
- Extended pedestrian areas (bulb-outs) at stations enabling shorter crosswalks for improved pedestrian safety;
- Shorter construction schedule compared to the combination side and median-running alternative by at least 5 to 8 weeks; and
- Bus lanes that could continue to be used by buses when rail is eventually implemented.

Since the median-running BRT configuration is only feasible in about a two-mile segment south of Gage Avenue, only 3 of the 13 station locations could accommodate median stations (Century, Manchester, Florence). This is due to the additional right-of-way required for median-running bus lanes and stations resulting in additional time for demolition, median and street reconstruction, additional signal and utility conflict work, and some tree removal, resulting in a cost increase of \$20 to \$80 million. Because Metro's Line 204 and LADOT DASH need to make additional stops between Imperial and Gage Avenues, local buses would not be able to use the median-running bus lanes or stations.

Additionally, the overall travel time for the median-running bus lanes would be only 1-2 minutes less than the side-running bus lanes due to the relatively short section of the corridor that can accommodate median-running lanes and stations.

### Recommended Project Description

The recommended Project would consist of 12.4 miles of all-day side-running dedicated bus lanes from 120th Street on the south to Sunset Boulevard on the north. This configuration allows 94% of the existing parking to remain, which is one of the most important assets to the community.

Dedicated bus lanes are one of the most crucial components of BRT. Combined with other BRT attributes such as transit signal priority, limited stops, frequent headways, all-door boarding, and enhanced stations, bus lanes significantly improve bus speeds and service reliability by allowing for more consistent travel times and enhancing the customer experience. Implementing these attributes ensures the BRT meets the Project goals and objectives and maintains its high performance over time even as traffic congestion worsens.

Additional Project features to be implemented at all 13 station locations include approximately 52 enhanced crosswalks to improve visibility and pedestrian safety, updated ADA-compliant curb ramps at 52 corners, and 26 bus bulb-outs. These bulb-outs will create larger pedestrian areas and reduce crosswalk distances. Additionally, bus bulb-outs will facilitate faster and more reliable bus operations by minimizing the time lost when buses merge in and out of bus or travel lanes.

Implementation of the Project is expected to result in travel times savings of 24% or 17 minutes end-to-end, as well as a 30% mile per hour improvement for buses. The Project is expected to increase corridor ridership from 38,000 daily boardings to approximately 66,000 daily boardings by 2045 due to more frequent service, faster travel speeds, and better reliability with dedicated bus lanes. The current on-time performance (OTP) of service on Vermont Avenue is approximately 70%. The goal is to improve OTP to at least 80% or better, and the bus-only lanes proposed in this project contribute to service reliability and on-time performance.

In March 2024, voters in the City of Los Angeles passed the Healthy Streets LA (HLA) initiative. HLA requires the City, when doing work on a city-owned street, to implement street enhancements described in its Mobility Plan 2035. Although the HLA ordinance does not specifically apply to Metro projects, the Vermont Transit Corridor Project helps achieve partial build-out of the Transit Enhanced Network (TEN) called for in the City of Los Angeles' Mobility Plan 2035. The Project also complements the City's goals of achieving a safer, more sustainable, and inclusive transportation network. Additionally, the Project and its associated street improvements do not preclude the City from implementing additional street improvements included in the Mobility Plan 2035.

A traffic analysis was conducted in 2024, in coordination with the City of Los Angeles, and estimated that approximately 25% of auto traffic on Vermont Avenue would divert to Hoover Street and Normandie Avenue, both of which have unused capacity that can accommodate the additional traffic. Another 15% of auto traffic on Vermont is expected to divert to other parallel major arterial streets outside of the study area (east of Hoover and west of Normandie). Consistent with the goals of the Mobility Plan 2035, the Project prioritizes transit in the corridor through the introduction of dedicated bus lanes with the expectation that auto traffic would adjust travel patterns as necessary. Staff also anticipate up to a 5% mode shift from single occupancy vehicles to transit.

### Environmental Analysis and Findings

Metro is seeking a statutory exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) through Senate Bill 922 (SB 922), which is codified as California Public Resources Code (PRC) 21080.25 (b). SB 922 exempts active transportation projects, including BRT projects, from CEQA requirements.

To support the case for the applicability of statutory exemption under SB922, Metro prepared three required analyses/reports: 1) Racial Equity Analysis; 2) Residential Displacement Analysis; and 3) Business Case Analysis. The SB 922 analyses are presented in the Vermont Transit Corridor Project Senate Bill 922 Reports: Racial Equity Analysis, Residential Displacement Analysis, and Business Case available on the Metro website at <https://www.metro.net/projects/vermont>.

Additionally, SB 922 requires that at least one public meeting be held to discuss each of the three reports, offering the public a chance to review and comment on them. The SB 922 documents were made available for review and comments at public libraries located on or near the corridor, as well as on the Metro website. The Metro project page noted the period to provide comments on the reports were November 22 to December 20, 2024. In early December, Metro hosted five (5) public meetings (Attachment F) throughout the corridor to not only present the report's findings but also to:

- Communicate details of the statutory exemption process so stakeholders are aware of the legal and environmental framework governing the Project
- Provide a comprehensive description of the Project's benefits and impact
- Allow the public to review the SB 922 documents

Approximately 80 comments were received at those meetings on the SB 922 reports. The sections below describe the three required analyses that were provided to the public about the impacts and benefits of the Project.

### Racial Equity Analysis

The purpose of the Racial Equity Analysis is to examine the impacts of the Project on different racial communities. The analysis identified which communities might benefit or be burdened by the Project, as well as strategies to mitigate any disproportionate impacts. Overall, based on data collected on race and ethnicity, low-income households, and zero-car households of the Project Area, 91.2% of the census tracts in the Project Study Area are considered Metro Equity Focus Communities (EFCs).

The findings showed that the Project would be implemented in a corridor with a high percentage of individuals identifying as Black or African American, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC). In Los Angeles County, the BIPOC population is 74.8%, while in the City of Los Angeles, it is 71.9%. In contrast, the percentage of BIPOC individuals in the Project Study Area is significantly higher, at 88.8%. Additionally, the analysis revealed that the Project Area contains 55.6% of low-income households and 20.4% of households with no access to a car.

These communities will benefit from the project as it would provide improvements to north-south transit services and thus improved access to jobs, education, and essential services along the corridor. The BRT will help alleviate the existing inequities such as slow bus speeds due to heavy traffic that affect those who rely on transit services, especially zero-car households. The project will also provide BRT stations with overhead bus canopies, passenger amenities, and clear signage in a heavily transit-dependent corridor.

The Vermont Transit Corridor Project would narrow the existing inequities by investing in a transit

system that supports a broad base of current and future users and reflects the needs of each distinct community by improving access, safety, and comfort. The Project would improve transit performance, enhance the experience for customers, invest in the community, and develop a cost-effective project.

### Residential Displacement Analysis

The purpose of the Residential Displacement Analysis was to identify areas at risk and the potential for residential displacement and develop strategies to mitigate the potential risks. The Project Study Area has a high percentage of BIPOC populations, low-income households, and renter-occupied homes, including vulnerable communities that could be affected by residential displacement. Residential displacement can occur in two ways: physical (direct) displacement and economic (indirect) displacement. Physical displacement results from eviction, property acquisition, rehabilitation, demolition, or the expiration of covenants on rent- or income-restricted housing. The Project involves a BRT project located entirely within the Vermont public right-of-way and would not directly contribute to residential displacement during either the construction or operation phases.

Economic displacement is related to unaffordable escalating rents or property taxes as related to development activities and changes in land uses. Metro does not have jurisdiction over land use or other community development efforts. The Project would provide better transit connectivity in the Vermont Corridor, which may indirectly spur new economic development opportunities and interest in housing development near transit stations that may benefit the community and increase the overall housing supply in the area. Strategies to avoid potential indirect impacts focus on Metro coordination and partnerships with Los Angeles County, the City of Los Angeles, public agencies, private developers, and the community. These coordination efforts would include encouraging land use plans and policies that minimize residential displacement, potential opportunities on public land to support housing, and joint development opportunities on Metro-owned parcels that could be developed to serve BRT users.

### Business Case Analysis

The purpose of the Business Case Analysis was to assess the Project's benefits, feasibility, costs, and overall impact of the investment. This analysis answers several key questions, including how the Project aligns with Metro's long-term goals, what the associated costs and benefits are, what the societal impacts might be, what the long-term financial implications are, and how the Project would be developed and implemented.

The Vermont Transit Corridor is currently the busiest bus corridor in the Metro system, with about 38,000 daily boardings. The selected Project would improve efficiency along the congested corridor and facilitate safe and accessible transport to major employment, social services, educational facilities, and regional activity centers. The Project supports the ambitions and goals from federal, state, and local governments, including transportation goals in Metro's 2020 Long Range Transportation Plan. The Project objectives would meet these long-range goals by significantly improving service reliability and ridership, reducing passenger travel times, enhancing stations and passenger amenities, improving pedestrian/bicycle access and safety and security, and better access to key destinations. Additionally, this Project complements the City's goals of achieving a safer, more



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sustainable, and inclusive transportation network as outlined in their Mobility Plan 2035.

Other Project benefits include the creation of an estimated 1,000 construction jobs per year, increased road safety, cleaner air, and \$5.40 in community benefits for every dollar spent. In addition, the Project is projected to save \$18.99 million by replacing Metro Rapid Route 754 and reducing Metro Line 204 travel times, resulting in a net operation and maintenance cost increase of \$8.54 million.

### CEQA Determination

Metro staff have identified that the Project qualifies for statutory exemption under SB 922. The Project improvements fall within the exemptions described in Section 21080.25(b) as noted below.

- Introduction of a new premium BRT service on Vermont Avenue, an existing public right-of-way (Section 21080.25(b)(5))
- New all-day bus lanes on 12.4 miles of Vermont Avenue from 120<sup>th</sup> Street to Sunset Boulevard (Section 21080.25(b)(4))
- An increase in weekday headways from 10 to 5 minutes throughout most of the day (Section 21080.25(b)(5))
- The implementation of transit signal priority and all-door boarding (Section 21080.25(b)(3))
- The addition of 26 enhanced stations and passenger amenities at 13 station locations, including real-time next-bus information (Section 21080.25(b)(5))
- The addition of bus bulbs at the 13 station locations to reduce bus stop delays and increase space for bus stop amenities and pedestrians (Section 21080.25(b)(5))
- The use of zero-emission, battery-electric buses (Section 21080.25(b)(5) and (6))

Given the above, the Project meets the definition of a statutory exempt project and is consistent with SB 922's intent to accelerate sustainable transportation projects by providing an exemption from CEQA for a targeted set of sustainable transit projects, "active transportation" (walking and biking), and projects that expand sustainable mobility.

### DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

Approval of this item and eventual completion of the Project will enhance safety by introducing dedicated bus lanes and bus bulbs. These improvements will reduce potential conflicts caused by buses weaving in and out of traffic. Additionally, bus bulbs will improve pedestrian safety by providing larger waiting areas and shortening crossing distances at station locations. The Project will also feature improved crosswalks for increased visibility of pedestrians and enhanced lighting at stations to boost safety and security for our customers. The Project will not compromise the safety of Metro's customers or employees.

### FINANCIAL IMPACT

The FY 2025 budget includes \$15M in Cost Center 4240 (Mobility Corridors Team 4), Project 471402 (Vermont Transit Corridor Project). Since this is a multiyear contract, the Cost Center Manager and Chief Planning Officer will be responsible for budgeting in future years for the balance of the

remaining Project budget.

### Impact to Budget

The funding source for the Vermont Transit Corridor Project is Measure M 35% Transit Construction. As these funds are earmarked for the Vermont Transit Corridor project, they are not eligible for Metro bus and rail capital and operating expenditures.

The preliminary cost estimate for the Project is \$393 million (year of expenditure) based on the 15% design developed for the end-to-end side-running configuration. Program Management will conduct an independent bottoms-up cost estimate during the Preliminary Engineering phase. The Measure M Expenditure Plan includes \$25 million in Measure M funds. The remaining \$400 million is anticipated to come from other local, state and federal sources. Staff are currently exploring opportunities for both state and federal funding opportunities, including a federal Small Starts Grant as directed by Motion 51 by Directors Dupont-Walker, Najarian, Mitchell, Solis, and Butts (Attachment C).

### EQUITY PLATFORM

The Vermont Transit Corridor Planning and Environmental Review contract was awarded in October 2023, with a significant Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) goal of 41.16%. The Vermont Transit Corridor will provide new benefits of enhanced mobility and improved regional access and connectivity in a corridor with a high percentage of individuals identifying as Black or African American, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC). In Los Angeles County, the BIPOC population is 74.8%, while in the City of Los Angeles, it is 71.9%. In contrast, the percentage of BIPOC individuals in the Project Study Area is significantly higher, at 88.8%. Additionally, the Project Area contains 55.6% of low-income households and 20.4% households do not have access to a car.

The Project will also help support transit-oriented communities' policies, improve safety, support first/last-mile connections, and invest in disadvantaged communities. The Vermont Transit Corridor is located almost entirely within (98%) Equity Focus Communities (EFCs). Throughout the planning and environmental review of this project, advancing transit equity was a critical part of setting up project objectives in evaluating alternatives, developing design elements, and engaging the community and stakeholders. In addition, Metro partnered with 38 CBOs/FBOs to support this work and advance equity in alignment with Metro's CBO Partnering Strategy. These partnerships were valuable in allowing Metro to reach a wider audience and gain valuable insights from stakeholders who may or may not typically engage with Metro's planning processes, resulting in a project that will reduce travel times by 24% (17 minutes end-to-end) and improve access to key destinations along the corridor. This partnership also resulted in the development of a recommended and/or preferred BRT alternative.

### VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED OUTCOME

VMT and VMT per capita in Los Angeles County are lower than national averages, the lowest in the SCAG region, and on the lower end of VMT per capita statewide, with these declining VMT trends due in part to Metro's significant investment in rail and bus transit.\* Metro's Board-adopted VMT reduction targets align with California's statewide climate goals, including achieving carbon neutrality

by 2045. To ensure continued progress, all Board items are assessed for their potential impact on VMT.

As part of these ongoing efforts, the Vermont Transit Corridor Project is expected to contribute to further reductions in VMT as it includes the implementation of a high-quality Bus Rapid Transit alternative along Vermont Avenue. This BRT service will enhance transit along the corridor by shortening passenger travel times and increasing service reliability and efficiency. This project is expected to encourage a shift from single-occupancy vehicles to public transit. Additionally, it will enhance access for cyclists and pedestrians to/from the stations.

To help characterize the VMT effects of the Project and provide a basis for comparing Project scenarios, the travel demand model estimated the Project's VMT benefit by multiplying the number of person-trips shifted from automobiles to transit because of the Project (as forecasted by the CBM18 B model [Metro, 2019b]) by the associated station-to-station (or comparable zone-to-zone) trip distances. The estimated user benefit is a savings of about 85,000 VMT resulting in the removal of 37 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> daily due to the implementation of the Project. A dedicated BRT lane can move 3 times the number of people per hour than a mixed traffic lane. This analysis was conducted as part of the Vermont Transit Corridor Planning and Environmental Study and aligns with the State statutory goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing multimodal transportation networks.

\*Based on population estimates from the United States Census and VMT estimates from the highway performance monitoring system data between 2001-2019.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

This Project will support the goals of the strategic plan by enhancing communities and lives through improved mobility and access to opportunities through the addition of a new high-quality mobility option, closing a gap in the transit network, and providing outstanding trip experiences.

## **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

The Board could consider not approving the Project/Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) nor concur that the Project should be exempt under SB 922. This option is not recommended as this would be contrary to the analysis conducted by staff and the community input received over the last year. The Board could also consider approving a combination side and median-running alignment. This option is also not recommended as it would result in a higher project cost, longer construction time, additional loss of on-street parking, and would not allow the local bus services to benefit from the BRT bus lanes and stations. This Project will provide long overdue benefits of enhanced mobility and improved regional access for transit-dependent and minority and/or low-income populations within the study area. Board approval of the Project and Locally Preferred Alternative does not preclude future extension of services beyond 120<sup>th</sup> Street to El Segundo Street.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Upon Board approval, staff will file a CEQA Notice of Exemption (NOE) for the Project with the Los

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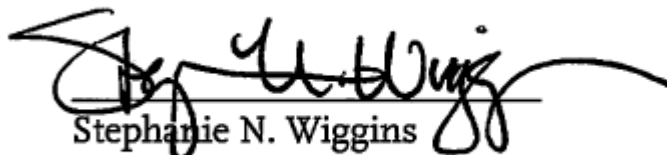
Angeles County Clerk and the Governor's Office of Planning and Research. Staff will also continue design work to 30% and continue coordination with the Federal Transit Administration on environmental clearance under the National Environmental Policy Act, which is anticipated to be complete by Summer 2025. Metro staff will continue to partner and work with the City of Los Angeles on any needed agreements in support of a timely construction schedule to meet the 2028 timeline. Additionally, staff will evaluate the potential extension of Metro and/or Gardena transit service on Vermont Avenue south of 120th Street to El Segundo Boulevard in response to some comments received.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- Attachment A - Map of Proposed Project with Station Locations
- Attachment B - Map of Vermont Transit Corridor
- Attachment C - September 2022 Board Motion
- Attachment D - Map of Vermont Corridor EFCs
- Attachment E - Community Engagement Activities
- Attachment F - December 2024 Public Meeting Details

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