



## Board Report

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Agenda Number: 8.

### PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING COMMITTEE MAY 20, 2020

**SUBJECT: FIRST/LAST MILE PLAN FOR PURPLE LINE EXTENSION SECTIONS 2 & 3**

**ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

CONSIDER:

- A. ADOPTING First/Last Mile Plan for Purple Line Extension Sections 2 & 3; and
- B. DIRECTING staff to return to the Board with implementation recommendations following completion of the First/Last Mile Guidelines.

#### **ISSUE**

Metro has completed work on a First/Last Mile (FLM) Plan for Purple Line Extension Sections 2 & 3 (Plan). The Plan presents FLM improvements around four future Purple Line (D Line) stations: Wilshire/Rodeo, Century City/Constellation, Westwood/UCLA, and Westwood/VA Hospital.

Adoption of the Plan by the Metro Board better positions FLM improvements for funding and implementation including pursuit of potential grant funding. Next steps for implementing the Plan will be presented to the Board upon adoption of the FLM Guidelines anticipated in summer 2020 so that action for Purple Line stations can be considered consistent with the approach for all projects.

#### **BACKGROUND**

FLM planning is part of Metro efforts to improve safety and access to transit. In 2016, Board Motion 14.1 directed staff to integrate planning and delivery of FLM improvements for new transit projects, beginning with PLE Section 2. Subsequent staff reporting to the Board (June 2016) established that for PLE Sections 2 and 3, FLM planning work would proceed in parallel to work on the rail project. Additionally, Board Motion 14.2 allowed city-funded FLM projects to count towards the required 3% local contribution for rail projects.

Metro prepared the Plan which includes proposed FLM projects developed through community engagement and technical analysis of station areas. Projects are categorized as pedestrian improvements and wheel improvements (e.g. for bicycles and scooters). The Plan's

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recommendations have been coordinated with local jurisdictions - the City of Beverly Hills, the City of Los Angeles, the County of Los Angeles, as well as with large institutional stakeholders including the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) and the West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Hospital- to complement street and land use plans and to facilitate future implementation efforts.

The Plan includes the following core documents:

- Pathways Maps
- Project List
- Rough-Order-of-Magnitude (ROM) Cost Estimation
- Project Scoring and Prioritization

They are accompanied by supporting documents that detail the planning process. The full Plan is available in Attachment B.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Plan Summary and Key Findings**

The Plan presents project ideas to improve safety, connectivity, and station accessibility for pedestrians and people who use bicycles (or other modes of non-motorized wheeled transportation). Broadly, improvements include, but are not limited to, new or improved sidewalks and crosswalks, bus stop improvements, pedestrian lighting, landscaping and shade, and various bicycle facilities.

At the Wilshire/Rodeo station, the arterials of Beverly Dr. and Wilshire Blvd. are heavily trafficked and would benefit from the high-quality pedestrian features already in place in much of the station area, along with enhancements and additions recommended in the Plan. Bicycle connections are key to station access and the plan includes bicycle improvements that align with the draft Beverly Hills Complete Streets Plan.

At Century City/Constellation station, Olympic Blvd., Santa Monica Blvd., and Avenue of the Stars are key spines for vehicular access. The Plan includes projects to help separate pedestrians and bicyclists from vehicles and improve safety and accessibility.

At Westwood/UCLA station, there are three planned access points that will make Westwood Blvd., Wilshire Blvd., and Gayley Ave. critical for users. Project staff anticipates high rail ridership and a need to better connect the station to the UCLA campus and Westwood Village for both pedestrians and bicyclists. The critical connection between the station and the center of the UCLA campus will require a roughly 20-minute walk, a little shorter than the 25 minutes by rail between the station and downtown Los Angeles.

At the Westwood/VA Hospital station, the VA campus encompasses the majority of the ½-mile access shed. The station will serve a veteran population while at the same time be the western terminus of the Purple (D) line. Various cut-through pathways are proposed on the campus to improve accessibility. Metro coordinated with the VA Hospital throughout the development of the Plan and coordination efforts will continue through the completion of the Greater LA Veterans Affairs Draft

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Master Plan.

A more detailed overview is available in the Plan Executive Summary in Attachment A.

### Process

The project team developed the Plan between October 2018 and March 2020 using the methodology in the Board-adopted First/Last Mile Strategic Plan (2014) along with adjustments based on experience with past FLM plans. Activities included walk audits of station areas, community engagement events, coordination with local jurisdictions, and the creation of pathways networks and project ideas.

### Community Engagement

Development of the Plan involved critical community engagement at various touchpoints. Community members provided local knowledge and insight that informed and largely determined the Plan's FLM projects. Staff aimed to reach diverse users of the streets including residents, students, businesses, and visitors to local attractions.

Engagement activities included eight walk audits—two for each station—conducted with community participation. For the walk audits, 231 individuals were invited to participate and ultimately 66 auditors recorded a total of 462 observations within a ½-mile radius of each station. Seven “pop-up” events were conducted locally at farmers markets and other community gatherings. These events tasked participants with analyzing large-format maps and providing feedback on potential FLM improvements. Surveys were also conducted at the pop-up events and online, resulting in 443 individual responses. Interviews with 21 stakeholders informed early stage planning work.

Metro's community engagement activities revealed sensitivities regarding FLM projects on Westwood Blvd. near the future Westwood/UCLA station. Staff met in-person with local community members, community groups including Neighborhood Councils and the Westwood Village Business Improvement District and issued a subsequent survey to collect written comments and better understand concerns. The survey yielded responses from 12 individuals. The comments focused on improvements to safety for cyclists and pedestrians; most comments regarding improved bicycle infrastructure expressed a desire for protected bicycle lanes, while confirming a broad range of opinion supporting and opposing proposed improvements on Westwood Blvd. and elsewhere in the station area. Metro is committed to further opportunities for community involvement and feedback as next steps are contemplated.

### Coordination with Local Jurisdictions

FLM projects require close coordination with and buy-in from local authorities that control the right-of-way around Metro stations. Metro held meetings with staff from the City of Beverly Hills, the City of Los Angeles, the County of Los Angeles. Staff conducted similar levels of coordination with the West Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Hospital and UCLA.

Metro met with these agencies at the beginning of FLM planning to introduce activities, learn about

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FLM needs and challenges, and discuss community engagement strategies. Metro also met with these agencies after the station pathways and potential projects were studied, providing them opportunity to review and comment on drafts of the Plan.

Local agency coordination also included briefings for elected official staff, and information presentations to local agency commissions/committees, Neighborhood Councils, and the Westwood Village Business Improvement District.

Comments from local jurisdictions and authorities on the Plan included interest in enhancement of bicycle facilities to protect bicyclists from vehicular traffic; a north/south bicycle and scooter connection between the Westwood/UCLA station and the UCLA campus; and sidewalk improvements and widening to serve anticipated increases in pedestrian traffic. Of note, comments from the City of Beverly Hills emphasized the opportunity to coordinate and align with the City's Draft Complete Streets Plan.

### Project Prioritization

The Plan includes a technical exercise to identify priority projects for the design phase, subject to further consideration.

### Equity Platform

The Equity Platform was addressed as follows:

- I. Define and Measure: Participation from different community stakeholders helped understanding of existing conditions around station areas;
- II. Listen and Learn: The plan was informed by extensive feedback with the broader community, including engagement at pop-up events and involvement of neighborhood groups, students and veterans at various stages of the process.

## **DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT**

The recommended action has no direct safety impact. This Plan presents project ideas that promote improved safety for people walking or using non-motorized wheeled transportation around future Purple Line stations.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

Adoption of this Plan has no impact to the budget. Next steps on selected FLM improvements require subsequent Board action which would have financial impact and will be detailed at that time. Note that staff is developing FLM Guidelines to formalize the approach, and next steps will be recommended consistent with the Guidelines. At this time, and in light of COVID-19, staff is assessing the Metro financial impacts associated with the FLM program, including the relationship FLM has with the transit project, what steps might best be implemented by local agencies, and the impact of the local agency option to use the 3% match for FLM.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

The recommended actions support two Strategic Plan goals:

- Deliver outstanding trip experiences (Goal #2): the FLM plan recognizes that trip experience includes time getting to and from transit stations. The Plan prepares projects that make trip experiences safer, more comfortable, and more accessible.
- Transform LA County through collaboration and leadership (Goal #4): Metro is uniquely situated to prepare FLM plans that span jurisdictional boundaries. In adopting this Plan, Metro can help facilitate implementation by local jurisdictions.

## **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

The Board could decide not to approve the FLM Plan. This is not recommended for the following reasons:

- 1) Previous board action (Motion 14.1) directs FLM projects to be incorporated into transit corridor project delivery; and
- 2) The City of Los Angeles, the City of Beverly Hills, and the County of Los Angeles would not be able to apply FLM expenditures from the FLM Plan toward their 3% local contribution to the transit project.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Staff anticipates returning to the Board concurrent with or following adoption of FLM Guidelines (anticipated summer 2020) with specific implementation recommendations for each of the Plans in line with the FLM Guidelines.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - Purple Line Extension Sections 2&3 First/Last Mile Plan Executive Summary

Attachment B - Purple Line Extension Sections 2&3 First/Last Mile Plan (Core and Supporting Documents)

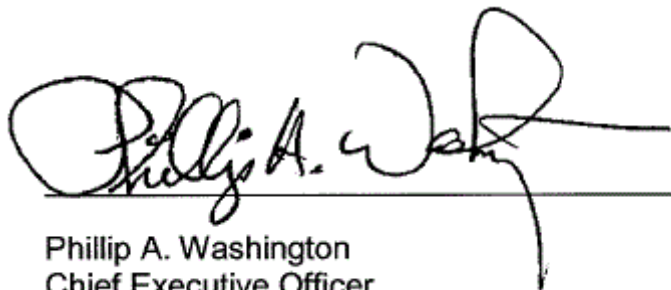
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