

South Bay Cities Council of Governments

June 9, 2014

TO: SBCCOG Steering Committee

FROM: Jacki Bacharach, Executive Director
Steve Lantz, Transportation Director

SUBJECT: Comments on the Metro Short Range Transportation Plan

ADHERENCE TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Goal B: Regional Advocacy. Advocate for the interests of the South Bay.

BACKGROUND

Metro is in the process of developing the Draft 2014 Short Range Transportation Plan (SRTP) which is a ten-year action plan that guides Metro programs and projects through 2024. It advances towards the long-term goals identified in the 2009 Long Range Transportation Plan, a 30-year vision for addressing growth and traffic in Los Angeles County. The SRTP identifies the short-term challenges, provides an analysis of financial resources, proposes action plans for the public transportation and highway modes, and includes other project and program initiatives. In addition, it addresses sustainability, future funding strategies, and lastly, measures the SRTP's performance.

URGENCY

Outreach meetings were conducted from mid-April to mid-June. The one in the South Bay was May 8 at the Hawthorne Memorial Center and although the Metro website says it was for South Bay Cities, the SBCCOG was not involved in this meeting.

The Metro Board will consider the SRTP for adoption in July 2014. Written comments are being accepted through June 18, 2014.

CONTROVERSY

A recent article in the San Gabriel Valley Tribune highlighted the intent of the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG) to re-open a long-standing funding issue related to equitable and timely extension of rail lines in Los Angeles County (see article, attachment A). The SGVCOG believes that Metro has committed to fund an extension of the Gold Line from Azusa to Claremont (or even into San Bernardino County to Montclair). The SGVCOG is aggressively seeking to fully fund the extension before 2020 and believes that the Metro Short Range Transit Plan (SRTP) provides the next opportunity for Metro to fund the extension.

The SGVCOG would change the funding plan in Metro's SRTP to fully fund the extension between Azusa and Montclair. The SBCCOG staff believes this advocacy is wholly inappropriate. The Metro SRTP is a ten-year action plan that guides funding of programs and projects through 2024. It identifies the short-term challenges, provides an analysis of Metro's **existing** financial resources, proposes action plans for the public transportation and highway modes, and includes other project and program initiatives. In addition, it addresses sustainability, future funding strategies, and lastly, measures the Plan's performance.

The SRTP is not intended to modify the LRTP nor is it used to accelerate or add projects. Hence, adding the Gold Line extension would be a zero sum game that would require the deferral of numerous current capital commitments and a significantly higher (and unrealistic) budget increase than is assumed in the current SRTP to operate and maintain an accelerated line segment.

SBCCOG staff believes that Metro is responsibly providing an appropriate planning process to develop project acceleration strategies and to consider new initiatives. Metro has provided the SGVCOG, SBCCOG and other COGs with planning grants to participate in the preparation of a countywide Mobility Matrix. This planning process will allow consideration of sub-regional mobility and sustainability priorities. Metro has stated the Mobility Matrix will guide the development of the next Metro LRTP that will be incorporated in SCAG's Regional Transportation Plan / Sustainable Communities Strategy.

The South Bay is also fortunate to be partnering with Metro in the preparation of a Sustainable South Bay study that has just been funded by the California Strategic Growth Council. This study will consider mobility and livability strategies such as climate action planning, neighborhood-oriented development, fleet electrification, mobility technology innovation, active transportation and regional transit access. Both the Mobility Matrix and the Sustainable South Bay Study are expected to identify high-priority South Bay projects while recognizing the need to adequately fund operation and maintenance of current South Bay roadways and transit systems.

For these reasons the SBCCOG staff strongly disagrees with the SGVCOG strategy as it specifically relates to the SRTP. Additionally, the SGVCOG Gold Line extension is in the same stage of development as the extension of the Green Line south to Crenshaw Boulevard in Torrance. Both of these projects will probably be considered for acceleration in any new Los Angeles County sales tax measure which would be more appropriate than changing the purpose of the SRTP.

In summary, the SBCCOG staff believes that the Mobility Matrix, the Sustainable South Bay Plan, and LRTP Update provide the proper context for consideration of new investments that will drive the strategy for the LRTP Update and will inform any potential new funding opportunity, such as a new sales tax measure. It is important to note that the SBCCOG has not taken a position on any new funding proposals such as a new countywide sales tax.

The SBCCOG has been working within the SCAG and Metro planning frameworks as we have expressed our concerns for neighborhood mobility, the benefits of slow speed lanes and infrastructure for electric vehicles. Our comments are based on studies and analysis, not on 'me

first'. However, for too long the South Bay has been at the back of the line for transportation infrastructure investments. With the continued aggressive stance of the SGVCOG and the emerging advocacy by other COGs in the county, the SBCCOG must much more aggressively advocate for South Bay mobility and sustainability needs in all future countywide and regional funding deliberations. Staff will return to the Board for policy direction as specific issues develop into the need for SBCCOG advocacy.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve a letter to be sent to the Metro Board re: these issues by June 18 to be reviewed by the Executive Committee (Chair, 1st and 2nd Vice Chairs & Immediate Past Chair)

Attachment 1

Gold Line extension to Claremont left off funding list by MTA

By [Steve Scauzillo](#), *San Gabriel Valley Tribune*

POSTED: 06/05/14, 10:50 PM PDT

Members of the agency in charge of extending the Gold Line to Claremont were shocked this week to learn the project is not included on the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's Short Range Transportation Plan.

Already, the omission has rekindled the bad blood between the independent Metro Gold Line Foothill Extension Construction Authority and MTA, known as Metro, that began when the last 12-mile extension of the northerly portion of the rail line was left out of Metro's long range planning in 2012.

Members of the Construction Authority board, including Metro board member John Fasana, a Duarte City Councilman, voted unanimously in May to direct Metro staff to list the full project in the plan.

So far, Metro has only given more than \$851 million for the project's first extension from east Pasadena to the Azusa/Glendora border, under construction and scheduled to be completed in September 2015. Monies for the entire project extension to Claremont and possibly beyond to Montclair or the Ontario International Airport are not mentioned.

"The board said in the motion that the Gold Line to Claremont should be included in the 10-year (short range) plan and should be on their future projects list," explained Lisa Levy Bush, spokesperson for the Construction Authority.

The total cost of the Gold Line Foothill extension to Claremont is about \$1.86 billion, a number the Metro staff does not recognize in the new document, she said.

But under Measure R, a half-cent sales tax passed by voters in 2008 for transportation projects, the full project to Claremont was listed. The fact that voters approved the entire project is ammunition being used by board members and members of the state Legislature to get Metro to amend the short-range plan by including the entire Gold Line extension along the foothills of Los Angeles County.

"I am extremely disappointed and frustrated that the plan totally ignores a regional priority — completion of the Gold Line Foothill Extension to Claremont," wrote Assemblyman Chris

Holden, D-Pasadena, in a letter to Metro's Robert Calix, transportation planning manager, dated May 29.

Holden goes on to say that the extension was listed by Metro as a capital project in the 2009 Long Range Transportation Plan as "first in line for any new funding sources outside federal New Starts," yet the latest document doesn't include the cost of the project to Claremont nor does it mention completion of the "voter-mandated project."

Doug Tessitor, chairman of the Gold Line Foothill Construction Authority Board, said it seems like every time the Gold Line takes a step forward, such as nearing completion of its first foothill extension, Metro wants to pull on the reins.

"We've always been the ugly step-child. They don't want us to go to the dance," he said in an interview Thursday.

Tessitor said he believes the board is more open to a regional approach to rail projects. He said new Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, who has tremendous power on the Metro board, has indicated his support for the foothill extension.

"I don't think it is coming from the board. I think it is the Metro staff led probably by Art Leahy. I don't know what his animus is against our project," Tessitor said.

Metro CEO Leahy has been vocal about not supporting the Foothill extension to Claremont, Montclair or Ontario. At a San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments meeting in June 2012 he said: "The Gold Line is funded to Azusa. Period. There is no more money for the Gold Line (Foothill Extension)."

Metro's short-range plan is an effort to appeal for more tax dollars, possibly through an additional tax measure for transportation set for the November 2016 ballot in Los Angeles County.

If additional funds were available, the plan calls for speeding up the completion dates for the following Metro projects:

Green Line Extension from 2035 to 2023; Westside subway (Purple Line Extension) from 2036 to 2025; LAX Metro Connector from 2028 to 2023; Sepulveda Pass Transit Corridor from 2039 to 2027.

It also calls for speeding up a planned extension of the Eastside Gold Line from East Los Angeles to either South El Monte along the 60 Freeway corridor or to Whittier along Washington Boulevard from 2035 to 2025.

Comments on the Metro short-range plan are being taken until June 18. The Metro board is scheduled to vote on the plan at its July board meeting.

Glendora and Montclair have also written letters to Metro asking that the short-range plan include the full extension, Tessitor said.