

Eco-Rapid Transit, formerly known as the Orangeline Development Authority, is a joint powers authority (JPA) created to pursue development of a transit system that moves as rapidly as possible, uses grade separation as appropriate, and is environmentally friendly and energy efficient. The system is designed to enhance and increase transportation options for riders of this region utilizing safe, advanced transit technology to expand economic growth that maximizes ridership in Southern California. The Authority is composed of the following public agencies:

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City of Bell Gardens

City of Bellflower

City of Cudahy

City of Downey

City of Glendale

City of Huntington Park

City of Maywood

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Ex-Officio
Rene Bobadilla
City Manager Representative

AGENDA REPORT

TO: Members of Eco-Rapid Transit

FROM: Michael Kodama, Executive Director

DATE: January 13, 2016

SUBJECT: **UPDATE AND/OR ACTION ON REQUEST TO METRO FOR FUNDING THE PREDEVELOPMENT STUDIES NECESSARY TO CONSTRUCT A SUSTAINABLE, EQUITABLE TRANSIT CORRIDOR**

ISSUE

Eco-Rapid Transit Joint Powers Authority desires to continue to work with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority "Metro" and its member cities to undertake a series of studies pertaining to development standards in the West Santa Ana Branch Transit Corridor that promote Corridor and Station Area economic development, housing choices and increased transit and non-vehicle transport. The underlying analysis and standards will fully support Metro's ongoing initiatives supporting designation and implementation of Transit Oriented Communities. This ensures that the development of this critical infrastructure is coordinated with regional plans and policies that provide improved project outcomes that serve multiple economic, environmental and social equity interests; setting the stage for public and private investment.

Staff recommends the Board of Directors approve a motion requesting funding from Metro to enable Eco-Rapid Transit to develop a comprehensive, coordinated, integrated and sustainable transit oriented communities development and sustainability program to benefit Eco-Rapid Transit Corridor Cities including transit station areas and "first/last mile" areas around the transit stations. Key objectives include creating the land use development strategies that enhance overall economic activity in the corridor and adjacent areas, promoting development patterns that maximizes transit accessibility and developing policies that support corridor cities jurisdictional cooperation required for corridor and station development. We anticipate this work will set a standard for how to carry out a Corridor-wide urban/transportation planning program while also creating a template for encouraging mutually supportive land use policies where transit lines cross City borders. This effort could then become the example of "best practices" for linking land use and transportation through establishing the planning objectives, development strategies, jurisdiction cooperation prior to corridor construction.

BACKGROUND

The West Santa Ana Branch Transit Corridor has been identified as a high priority transit project by the Gateway Cities Council of Governments (COG) Strategic Transportation Plan (STP). In order to undertake the necessary studies, Eco-Rapid needs funding. The projected planning effort will seek to tie together and to utilize current and projected State sustainability and economic development laws and tools to craft an implementation strategy having support from each member City and other entities (Metro, Caltrans, and others) relative to the development objectives

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and potential related infrastructure improvements or enhancements. The planning program would include CEQA analysis adequate to environmentally clear the development plan for each station area (which often includes multiple cities working together). Additionally, the project would include sufficient community outreach, education, and information to achieve local support for plan initiatives. As a sound plan includes relevant economic analysis to determine the real property investment potential, the project also includes appropriate study of emerging opportunities, expansion potential, and the implementation actions necessary to activate development potential. A key aspect of this analysis is to identify factors that promote and sustain the viability of a Transit Corridor to connect persons to their primary destination via transit, and that, secondly provide personal services, shopping and entertainment goods and services and housing opportunities at individual stations that link to people who live in the Corridor.

Eco-Rapid Transit staff is seeking the funding in order to support a multi-jurisdictional planning effort that brings the corridor cities together in consideration of housing, economic development, land development practices and transportation decision-making in a manner that empowers each jurisdiction to consider the interdependent challenges of economic growth, infrastructure needs, social equity and environment impact simultaneously. The State’s EnviroScreen administered by CalEPA has designated the Corridor cities as “Disadvantaged Communities” in response to state legislation: SB 535 (De Leon, Chapter 830, Statutes of 2012). Metro has recently incorporated this metric into their planning and programming process. Potentially, this approach can result in corridor-wide policies that uniformly encourage appropriate development at key sites increasing the utility of using transit while reducing the need for vehicle trips.

Eco-Rapid Transit will continue working with the cities and the communities along the corridor to facilitate access, review and comments regarding environmental and planning documents. This includes modifying/updating plans and policies to integrate transportation and sustainable development. The analysis will examine corridor infrastructure and evaluate existing and potential utilities—electric, water, storm water, sewage, fiber and resiliency, that impact the development potential in corridor communities and addresses the demands of all forms of existing and future transportation, housing, economic development, parking and environmental quality in an integrated fashion. The Gateway Cities COG, in partnership with member cities and Metro has been developing a Strategic Transportation Plan (STP). Recently, the COG transmitted to Metro, based on the STP analysis, a list of high priority transit investments which included the West Santa Ana Branch Corridor.

This builds upon “Metro Countywide Sustainability Planning Policy & Implementation Plan”, as well as the development of the Eco-Rapid Transit Board adopted and Metro funded Transit Oriented Development Guidebook, Federal Transportation/Land Use Grant, the West Santa Ana Branch refinement study and recent discussions at the Transportation Summit to become the first corridor to develop plans that support the development of a sustainable regional transit community corridor and Transit Oriented Community Development. The approach being proposed strongly support’s the vision and policy direction initiated by Metro CEO, Phil Washington, entitled “Transit Oriented Communities.”

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RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board:

1. Discuss information presented and offer action items; and/or
2. Approve Motion requesting funding; and
3. Request member cities adopt Motion requesting funding; and
4. Receive and file the item.