

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:

- City of Artesia
- City of Bell
- City of Bell Gardens
- City of Cerritos
- City of Cudahy
- City of Downey
- City of Glendale
- City of Huntington Park
- City of Maywood
- City of Paramount
- City of South Gate
- Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport Authority

- Chair
Ali Sajjad Taj
Council Member
City of Artesia

- Vice-Chair
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Councilmember
City of Downey

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Alejandra Cortez
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City of Bell Gardens

- Executive Director
Michael R. Kodama

- General Counsel
Matthew T. Summers

- Ex-Officio
William Rawlings
City Manager Representative

A G E N D A R E P O R T

TO: Members of Eco-Rapid Transit Board of Directors
FROM: Michael Kodama, Executive Director
DATE: October 13, 2021
SUBJECT: **UPDATE AND/OR ACTION REGARDING WSAB CORRIDOR OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION REQUEST**

Public comments on items on the agenda will be taken at the time the item is called and are limited to 3 minutes per speaker

ISSUE

Eco-Rapid Transit staff seeks your guidance regarding the continued outreach and community outreach. This is a work in progress and truly needs to be a team effort.

BACKGROUND

Chair Ali Sajjad Taj has proposed a three-prong approach to outreach in the corridor. This includes:

- Top – down working with our federal, state and Metro representatives
- Bottoms – up working with our communities
- Media – working with television, radio, print and social media

During the past few months, Chair Taj and members of the Board of Directors have met with:

- Congressmember Linda Sanchez
- Congressmember Nanette Barragán
- Office of Congressmember Jimmy Gomez
- Senator Lena Gonzalez
- Senator Bob Archuleta
- Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon
- Supervisor Janice Hahn
- Supervisor Hilda Solis
- Metro Board Director Fernando Dutra
- Metro Board Director Ara Najarian
- Office of Mayor Eric Garcetti
- Councilmember Kevin De León
- Metro CEO Stephanie Wiggins

Meetings are being scheduled with federal and state legislators in our corridor. We are also meeting with key stakeholders in the region.



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Staff has reached out to media outlets in the region and can use your help. Recent articles have been in the Los Cerritos News and Rafu Shimpo (see attached). We are in discussion with potential television coverage. Metro has conducted interviews in our corridor that can be helpful (testimonials). This is an on-going effort.

Staff is seeking ways to increase community participation. We know that there are some big dates in front of us such as the Metro Board's selection of the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) in January and the need to work with everyone to secure federal and state funding for the project. There is an opportunity to be better – how do we become the best line in the Metro system and provide outstanding service in our communities?

While we appreciate Metro's effort to outreach in the communities, we also believe that you know your communities better than anyone and must be an active partner to not only conduct outreach, but also empower your communities. This project is for the next generation – they will be the riders. Perhaps we can activate the younger generation/community. The question is – how do we reach the future users of the WSAB line?

Taking a look at the entire line, perhaps we can start with our cities, city managers and their park and recreation department. It is clear that this is an important user group that can be a great asset and be involved in helping to plan the line. Think of the younger generation and the message needed to reach them and how they can become important partners to help develop the line.

The WSAB line opens up so many possibilities for the younger generation to experience Los Angeles and destinations in the corridor. Disney Hall, LA River and many other destinations become accessible. We need to think how the message is delivered to this audience. Current students will be riding this line as adults. The communication tools and messaging are very different with a much shorter attention span. Yet – how do we access this group? It could make us special.

We suggest that this is a joint effort with our members and with Metro. This is an opportunity to empower our communities and involve them in the decision-making process.

RECOMMENDATION

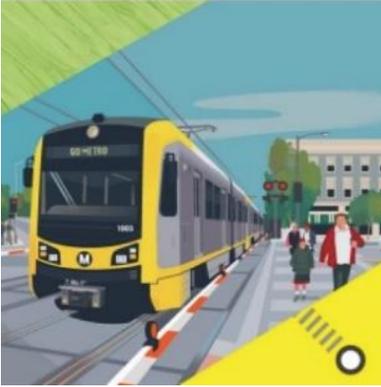
It is recommended that the Board:

1. Direct staff to contact our city managers and request assistance from Parks and Recreation to develop a plan and action items for including the youth in planning and developing the transit corridor;
2. Discuss information presented and offer action on item; and/or
3. Receive and file the item.



Winner of Fourteen
LA Press
Club Awards from
2012-2018.

Eco-Rapid Lite Rail Board Votes for Artesia to Paramount Line



BY BRIAN HEWS

(September 23, 2021) ~The Eco-Rapid Transit Board of Directors completed its review of the Metro Draft West Santa Ana Branch Environmental Impact Statement and unanimously voted to support "Alternative 1," the one-seat ride to Union Station.

The Board of Directors also recommended the inclusion of a station in Little Tokyo as this station provides access to Downtown destinations, the Metro Regional Connector and offers the ability to transfer to destinations in East Los Angeles and eventually Whittier.

Board Chair and Artesia City Councilmember Ali Sajjad Taj stated, "This is an important step in the process of bringing this important rail line to our communities."

For 20 years, the Eco-Rapid Transit Joint Powers Authority have been working together to bring rail transit to Southeast Los Angeles. This \$9.8 billion 19.4 mile light rail line would connect communities from Artesia to Downtown Los Angeles.

Now it is becoming closer to reality with the Metro Board of Directors scheduled to select a locally preferred alternative in December or January.

Eco-Rapid Transit consists of 12 members including Artesia, Bell, Bell Gardens, Cerritos, Cudahy, Downey, Glendale, Huntington Park, Maywood, Paramount, South Gate and the Burbank Glendale Pasadena Airport Authority.

This line will serve a population of 1.4 million people through some of the densest parts of Los Angeles County.

Communities such as Maywood, Cudahy, and Huntington Park have densities that rival Manhattan. Much of the area consists of minority, low-income populations.

83.1% of the population are minorities, including over 90% being Hispanic, with about 76% of the residents speaking Spanish. Over 40 languages are spoken in the corridor.

The board members are local elected officials who care about their communities and recognize the importance of bringing this important rail transit line that can provide 100 years of service.

Board Director and South Gate Councilmember Maria Davila said, "We have been working on this for a long time. We are stronger all working together in support of this project. We recognized the challenges of obtaining funding to build this project. For our communities, this is also a question of fairness and equity."

You can still provide your own comments. Metro is accepting comments on the Draft West Santa Ana Branch light rail project Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement until September 28th.

POSTED IN COMMUNITY - Southeast Cities Back WSAB Little Tokyo Station
by JK Yamamoto September 28, 2021



The West Santa Ana Branch Transit Corridor project would connect Downtown Los Angeles, Huntington Park, Bell, Cudahy, South Gate, Downey, Bellflower and Artesia. Elected officials representing cities on the southeast end of Los Angeles County voted unanimously Sept. 21 to support the addition of a new Little Tokyo station on a proposed light rail alignment from the city of Artesia to Union Station.

The action follows a review of Metro’s Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (DEIR/EIS) for the proposed \$9.8 billion, 19.3-mile alignment, known as

the West Santa Ana Branch (WSAB), which would connect southeast cities to Downtown Los Angeles.

Earlier, the Little Tokyo Business Association, Japanese American Nation Museum, and St. Francis Xavier Japanese Catholic Center announced support for the new alignment as well as the addition of a station near 2nd and Alameda streets in Little Tokyo. The alignment would travel underground along Alameda and is one of four alternatives being considered, including an alignment to 7th and Metro/8th and Figueroa Street in Downtown L.A.; Pioneer Station in Artesia to Slauson and the A Line (Blue); and Pioneer Station to the 105 Freeway (Green Line).

Meanwhile, residents in condominiums facing Alameda are asking that the suggested station entrance east of Alameda be moved away from their purview, citing construction and security concerns.

The vote by the Eco-Rapid Transit Board of Directors follows a review of the DEIR/EIS, which was released July 30 by Metro. Board Chair and Artesia City Councilmember Ali Sajjad Taj stated, "This is an important step in the process of bringing this important rail line to our communities."

The station provides access to the Metro Regional Connector scheduled to open next fall and offers the ability to transfer to destinations in East Los Angeles and eventually Whittier. Downey City Councilmember Sean Ashton, who has long-standing family ties to Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple, emphasized, "It is important that we all support the line from Artesia to Union Station. We need to do this project right. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

The Metro Board of Directors is scheduled to select a locally preferred alternative in December or January.

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"This line will serve a population of 1.4 million people through some of the densest parts of L.A. County. Communities such as Maywood, Cudahy, and Huntington Park have densities that rival Manhattan," points out planning consultant Michael R. Kodama, who serves as ERT executive director.

"For our communities, this is also a question of fairness and equity. As environmental justice communities who have been overlooked, only by working together have we been able to bring this transformative project to our communities. It rights a wrong that should have been addressed a long time ago and becomes a catalyst for economic and community development opportunities for our residents and businesses."

It is estimated that the new light rail could reduce travel time from hours by bus to under 40 minutes in the corridor.

About \$4 billion has been raised to build the project, partly through the Measure M sales tax approved by L.A. voters in 2016. Still, Metro faces challenges in obtaining the additional \$4-\$5 billion needed to build the project.

Metro is accepting comments on the project until Sept. 28. Online comment form is available at <https://metro.commentinput.com/comment/index?id=GtJAg>.