

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
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AGENDA REPORT

TO: Members of Eco-Rapid Transit Board of Directors

FROM: Michael Kodama, Executive Director

DATE: October 13, 2021

SUBJECT: **AUTHORIZE LETTER TO METRO CHAIR AND LOS ANGELES COUNTY SUPERVISOR HILDA SOLIS 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 requests approval to send a letter to Supervisor Hilda Solis that outlines a strategy of outreach to gain community participation and request her support in implementing said strategy.

BACKGROUND

On June 30, 2021, L.A. Metro released the WSAB Transit Corridor Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) for review and comment. On September 28, 2021 the comment period closed and soon the Metro Board will make a determination on which alternative and design options will be chosen for development. Eco-Rapid transit Board has taken the position to unanimously support Alternative 1, with Design Option 2, which will take the proposed light rail train to Union Station with a Little Tokyo Station included in the design.

To continue the efforts to gain support and provide an opportunity for the community to voice their opinion and participation in this process, Eco-Rapid Transit staff is reaching out to the corridor cities and community leaders to assist in increasing the level of community participation at the upcoming Metro Planning and Programming Committee meeting and Metro Board Hearing. A letter has been drafted requesting Supervisor Hilda Solis to allow the community to testify on this matter from the City Hall or from a nonprofit or community based organization office in their local communities.

Many people do not have access to the internet nor do they wish to gather at a location that may be overcrowded; creating health and safety issues associated to the ongoing pandemic conditions. It is felt that community participation will be stronger and their voice more effective with the ability to speak on the preferred Alternative from their respective local City Hall or community based organization instead of having to attend the Metro Committee and Board meetings in person. Staff is suggesting the letter be sent to Supervisor Soils which outlines the concept of this participation effort and the basis for requesting her support.



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RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board:

1. Authorize staff to send a letter to Metro Chair and Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis Requesting the inclusion of local city halls, non profits and/or community based organizations as an alternate site to deliver comments and participate on the Metro West Santa Ana Branch Locally Preferred Alternative Agenda Item at the Metro Planning and Programming Committee Meeting and Metro Board Meeting.
2. Discuss information presented and offer action on item; and/or
3. Receive and file the item



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October 13, 2021

Honorable Hilda Solis
Los Angeles County Supervisor, District 1
856 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles CA 90012

RE: Request for Community Participation Support and Assistance

Dear Supervisor Hilda Solis,

As you are aware, on June 30, 2021, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) released the West Santa Ana Branch (WSAB) Transit Corridor Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) for review and comment. On September 28, 2021, the comment period closed and soon the Metro Board will make a determination on which alternative and design option will be chosen for development. The Eco-Rapid Transit Board unanimously supports Alternative 1, with Design Option 2, which will take the proposed light rail train alignment from the Artesia Station to Union Station, with the Little Tokyo Station included in the design. This alternative and design option is the only one that will achieve the goals and objectives the transit line originally intended. We believe this is what our community needs and wants for their future transportation objective.

Prior to, and throughout the comment period, Eco-Rapid Transit has worked diligently to inform the community and gather opinions about the WSAB Project. To continue this effort in lifting the community's voice and participation, Eco-Rapid Transit is reaching out to ask for your support in working with the corridor cities and community leaders to assist in increasing the level of community participation at the upcoming Metro Planning and Programming Committee meeting and Metro Board Hearings to be held in January.

As an option, it is felt that it would be beneficial to allow the community to testify on this matter from City Hall's and/or nonprofit and community-based organization offices in their local communities. Many people do not have access to the internet nor do they wish to gather at a location that may be overcrowded; creating health and safety issues associated to the ongoing pandemic conditions, but they want to be heard. It is felt that community participation will be stronger and their voice more effective with the ability to speak on their preferred Alternative from their respective local City Hall, nonprofit or community-based organization offices as an alternative to attending the Metro Committee and Board meetings in person. For example, if the meetings can be broadcasted on big screens in the council chambers or other city facilities, people can gather in smaller numbers along the West Santa Ana Branch corridor and testify about the project and their preferred alternative and design option. We look at this as a great opportunity for exposure for the Project which gives the community a feeling that care and consideration has been afforded them to accommodate their need to be heard even in this continued pandemic state of emergency.

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We hope this idea is worth pursuing/implementing and we appreciate your consideration of our request.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or our Executive Director, Michael Kodama. Mr. Kodama can be reached via e-mail at mkodama@eco-rapid.org or via cell phone at 818 468-8593.

Sincerely,

Ali Sajjad Taj
Chair, Eco-Rapid Transit