

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL

February 2, 1998

FROM: City Manager

SUBJECT: Pasadena Blue Line Update

RECOMMENDATION:

This report is for information only.

BACKGROUND:

On January 14, 1998 the Board of Directors of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority suspended construction and began demobilization of the Pasadena Blue Line, the East Side Red Line Extension and the Mid-City Red Line Expansion. Of the three projects suspended construction on the Pasadena Line was furthest along.

The suspension stopped all new construction as well as design of the Blue Line stations and line segments from just north of the Holly Street Apartments to the terminus at Sierra Madre Villa. Design of the line segments from Union Station to the Holly Street Apartments will be completed.

The suspension and demobilization process also allows design work for the Chinatown Aerial, L.A. River to the Arroyo Seco Bridge, Arroyo Seco Bridge to Del Mar Boulevard and Del Mar Boulevard to Memorial Park segments. (See Attachment A for update on project construction and design work.

MTA staff attempted to gain Board approval for an indefinite suspension of the Blue Line. Staff successfully worked with Supervisor Molina's office and East Side Extension advocates on a Board motion that requires the CEO to report to the Board in six months. The CEO also publicly committed to meet with the corridor communities and explore options for the Blue Line. Public support for the Blue Line at the January 14 meeting, especially from members representing the San Gabriel Valley COG was strong. Blue Line supporters dominated the public testimony.

Funding Options

City staff believes based on preliminary discussions that the project could be constructed at a considerably lower cost than estimated by involving the private sector more in actual construction management.

Private construction management companies have, approached the City with the idea that private funding and cost reductions may be able to fill the \$228 million gap in the Blue Line budget. They believe the construction budget can be reduced and the project completed in three years if the MTA gives up direct administrative control. This idea is the basis for the City's call for in-depth discussions with the MTA to determine whether or not privatization options are viable. A proposal to the MTA for such discussions initially received little attention, however, the CEO publicly pledged to Board Member Ororpeza that he would meet with Blue Line supporters for further discussions. Efforts to set up that meeting through Assemblyman Scott, are underway.

State

Senator Schiff has prepared several bills dealing with the Blue Line, including proposals to take responsibility for construction of the Blue Line away from the MTA and vest it in a separate authority; another bill would require that nearly \$390 million of state funding currently earmarked for the project would remain committed. Legislative support from area state elected officials has been strong.

The California Transportation Commission (CTC) remains watchful and skeptical about the MTA recovery plan, especially the proposal to use \$207 million of state (SB 45) funds to complete the North Hollywood extension of the subway. There are rumors that the CTC may reject the MTA's proposed CTIP list. Pasadena staff is meeting with CTC members regarding the Blue Line.

A coalition of cities is also attacking the diversion of these funds to North Hollywood. However, their mission is to return all \$345 million in SB 45 funds to cities. Under this scenario a multi-model regional transportation system would be impossible.

Federal

Support from Congressman Rogan and Dreier remains strong. Congressman Dreier has communicated his displeasure about the suspension of work on the Blue Line. Staff is working in conjunction with the San Gabriel Valley COG to develop joint responses with Rogan and Dreier's offices.


Media

The tone of media coverage has improved. The Times has printed several stories that favorably contrast the Blue Line to the subway. The Times editorial staff, however, has refused all requests for meetings. Star-News reportage and editorial support continue to be strong. The Daily News has continued to oppose the MTA rail program totally.

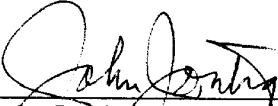
San Gabriel Valley

COG support is strong. Several COG Board members testified on behalf of the Blue Line before the MTA Board. The COG officially requested more information about creating a San Gabriel Valley Transportation Authority.

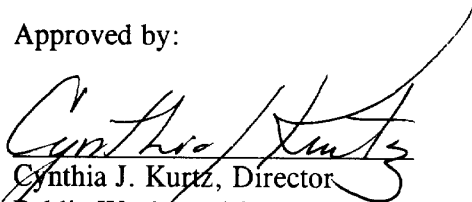
Respectfully submitted,


PHILIP A. HAWKEY
City Manager

Prepared by:


John Jontig, Manager
Light Rail Project

Approved by:


Cynthia J. Kurtz, Director
Public Works and Transportation