

Agenda Report



Date: March 28, 2017
To: Jeffrey W. Collier, City Manager
From: Nancy Mendez, Assistant City Manager
Subject: Washington Boulevard Light Rail Subcommittee Update

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended the City Council receive an update report from the City Council Washington Boulevard Light Rail Subcommittee and adopt a resolution supporting the Atlantic Underground variation of the Washington Boulevard alignment.

BACKGROUND

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) Eastside Gold Line Phase II light rail project seeks to extend the Gold Line east from its current terminus at Pomona Boulevard and Atlantic Boulevard. Council Members Josué Alvarado and Fernando Dutra serve on the City Council's Washington Boulevard Light Rail Subcommittee.

The cities of Whittier, Pico Rivera, Santa Fe Springs, and Commerce formed the Washington Boulevard Coalition to support the Washington Boulevard route for these reasons:

- It best supports regional land use objectives.
- It is projected to have the highest number of new riders.
- It provides transit to the highest number of low income households and seniors.
- It provides service to the most transit-dependent population.
- It allows the greatest overall user benefit hours.
- It connects communities by linking regional employment, education, shopping, healthcare, and homes.

Metro released the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Eastside Extension project area in August 2014 and the City and community provided numerous comments supporting the Washington Boulevard alignment. In November 2014, the Metro Board determined to continue study on both the Washington Boulevard and 60 Freeway alignments and instructed its staff to pursue these technical refinements:

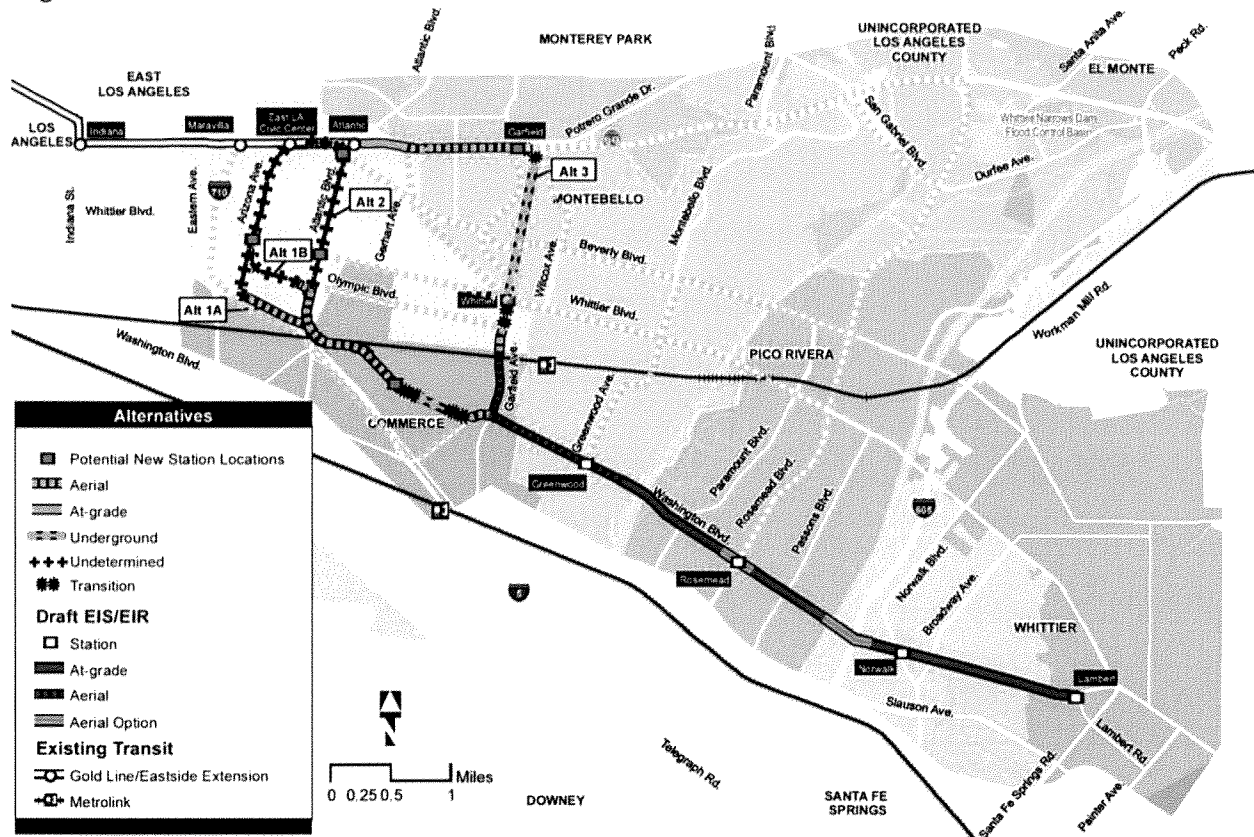
- Conduct additional technical work to address comments received by partner agencies regarding SR-60 North Side Design Variation alternative.
- Eliminate a proposed aerial alignment along a portion of Garfield Ave and identify a new route for the Washington Blvd alternative.
- Explore the potential for operating both proposed alternatives.
- Develop a cost containment plan.

In March 2010, the City Council adopted a resolution supporting the Washington Boulevard alignment for the proposed Eastside Extension. In March 2016, the City Council adopted a resolution affirming continued support for the Washington Boulevard alignment, particularly for the Arizona Avenue variation.

DISCUSSION

During the continued study period, city representatives from the Washington Boulevard Coalition have met regularly with Metro to provide input on route variations that would be supported by the communities through which it travels. The Coalition initially agreed to support a route variation using Arizona Avenue to travel north-south from the Gold Line terminus to Washington Boulevard. As additional studies were conducted and community comments were received, however, the Coalition transitioned to support the Atlantic Underground variation (Figure 1). This north-south route avoids objections from Montebello to the use of north-south routes in their community, better satisfies the concerns of East Los Angeles residents, and affords the benefits of traveling to Whittier Boulevard in East Los Angeles and serving both the Citadel shopping area and Casino in Commerce.

Figure 1



The City Council may formally support the Atlantic Underground variation of the Washington Boulevard alignment for the Eastside Extension by adopting a resolution (Attachment A). The resolution advocates for a north-south route that results in light rail service into major employment centers in the City of Commerce before service continues onto Washington Boulevard east into Whittier. The resolution language encourages Metro to enable East Los Angeles residents to determine the precise location of the route through their community.

Metro Meetings

The Metro Board and its Planning and Programming Committee will consider the route variations at meetings in April 2017. The Subcommittee considers community input to Metro about the benefits of the light rail route along Washington Boulevard to be vitally important, and encourages Whittier residents and businesses to submit comments to Metro supporting the Washington Boulevard route prior to April 12, 2017. Comment cards will be available at community meetings and at City facilities (Attachment B). The City is also hosting a letter-writing workshop at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 29, 2017 at the Community Center for residents who would like additional assistance to complete comments to submit to Metro, and to provide further information to those who were unable to attend the February 2017 Metro workshop in Whittier.


The City Council subcommittee and elected officials from other Washington Boulevard Coalition cities will support the Washington Boulevard alignment at these meetings at Metro headquarters in Los Angeles:

- Metro Planning and Programming Committee, Wednesday, April 12, 2:00 p.m.
- Metro Board meeting, Thursday, April 20, 9:00 a.m.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Submitted by:


Nancy Mendez
Assistant City Manager

Attachments: A – Proposed Resolution
B – Comment Card

RESOLUTION NO.

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WHITTIER, CALIFORNIA, SUPPORTING THE ATLANTIC UNDERGROUND VARIATION OF THE WASHINGTON BOULEVARD ROUTE AS THE PREFERRED ALIGNMENT FOR THE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY EASTSIDE GOLD LINE TRANSIT CORRIDOR PHASE II

WHEREAS, the City of Whittier is committed to being a partner in the Eastside Gold Line Transit Corridor Phase II project;

WHEREAS, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) is evaluating technical revisions for two alignments from the current Eastside Gold Line terminus at Atlantic Boulevard and Pomona Boulevard, a Washington Boulevard option ending at PIH Health and a SR-60 option ending at the I-605/Peck Road;

WHEREAS, Metro is considering variations for the Washington Boulevard route, including the Atlantic Underground variation to Washington Boulevard;

WHEREAS, a north-south route that results in light rail service into major employment centers in the City of Commerce before service continues onto Washington Boulevard east into Whittier is critically important;

WHEREAS, the Atlantic Underground variation avoids objections from Montebello to the use of north-south routes in their community and affords the benefits of traveling to Whittier Boulevard in East Los Angeles and of serving both the Citadel shopping area and Casino in Commerce;

WHEREAS, the Washington Boulevard alignment employing the Atlantic Underground variation best supports the project's goals to improve mobility within the study area and plan for projected population growth and future congestion issues;

WHEREAS, East Los Angeles residents should be enabled to determine the precise location of the route through their community via public input on the Atlantic Underground variation;

WHEREAS, the chosen alignment will impact the socioeconomic fabric of the region and the City for decades to come; and

WHEREAS, the City of Whittier is committed to providing its residents with alternative modes of transportation.

NOW THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WHITTIER, CALIFORNIA, DOES RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The City Council agrees to collaborate with Metro in bringing the Eastside Gold Line Corridor Phase II alignment to the City of Whittier.

SECTION 2. The City Council places its full support behind the Atlantic Underground variation of the Washington Boulevard alignment for the Eastside Extension.

SECTION 3. The City Council approves the Washington Boulevard Light Rail Subcommittee direction and directs staff to work with Metro, community stakeholders and neighboring cities in garnering support for the Washington Boulevard alignment.

SECTION 4. The City Clerk-Treasurer shall certify to the passage and adoption hereof.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 28th day of March 2017.

JOSEPH A. VINATIERI, Mayor

ATTEST:

KATHRYN A. MARSHALL
City Clerk-Treasurer

Date: _____

Attachment B



To Metro:

- **Please complete the environmental process for the Washington Boulevard alignment.**
- **I support the Washington Boulevard Alignment/Atlantic Underground Variation for the Goldline Eastside Phase II Light Rail extension because:**

Thank you for considering what we want and need!

Name _____ Email _____

Please return form by April 10, 2017 to: Gold Line, 13225 Walnut St., Whittier, CA 90602 or Goldline@cityofwhittier.org

Fecha: _____



A Metro:

- **Por favor complete el proceso ambiental para la alineación de Washington Boulevard.**
- **Apoyo la alineación del bulevar de Washington / la variación subterránea atlántica para la extensión del carril ligero de la fase II de Goldline Eastside porque:**

¡Gracias por considerar lo que queremos y necesitamos!

Nombre _____ Email _____

Por favor devuelva el formulario antes del 10 de abril de 2017 a: Gold Line, 13225 Walnut St., Whittier, CA 90602 or Goldline@cityofwhittier.org