

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

Meeting Date: 10/24/05		Item Number: <u>J-2</u>	
AGENDA ITEM: A Joint Item Discussion of the Final Environmental Impact Report, dated October 2005, for the Proposed Metro Exposition Light Rail Transit Project.			
Contact Person/Dept.: Susan Yun/ Community Development		Phone Number: (310) 253-5755	
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒		General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒	
Public Hearing: ☐		Action Item: ☒ Attachments: ☐	
Public Notification: Citywide postcard notification on 10/13/05; Publication in the Culver City News on 10/13/05; 10/20/05; 11/10/05 and 11/17/05; Posted on City's Website on 10/13/05 and Master Notification List on 10/12/05 and 10/19/05.			
Department Approval: Susan Evans 10/13/05		CAO Approval: Jerry Fulwood 10/19/05	
City Controller Approval: N/A			

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council (the "Council") and the Culver City Redevelopment Agency (the "Agency") discuss the Final Environmental Impact Report, dated October 2005, for the proposed Metro Exposition Light Rail Transit Project and Provide Direction to Staff.

BACKGROUND:

On October 14, 2005, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) circulated for public review the Final Environmental Impact Report/Statement (the "Final EIR"), dated October 2005, for the Exposition Light Rail Transit project as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Metro, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the U.S. Department of Transportation are the "Lead Agencies" for this Final EIR and will take separate actions on the Final EIR.

Culver City received the Final EIR on Wednesday, October 12, 2005 and immediately distributed it to City Departments and the City Council for review. The 45-day public comment period on the Final EIR began on October 14, 2005 and ends on November 28, 2005.

While the staff and consultant team is analyzing the Final EIR and formulating detailed comments for Council /Agency consideration, staff is seeking early Council

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/Agency and community input. A second public meeting will be held with the City Council/Agency on November 21, 2005, to consider adoption of a resolution transmitting the City's official comments on the Final EIR.

Consideration of the Final EIR document by the Council/Agency does not constitute an approval of Metro's Exposition Light Rail Transit project in any manner. As required by the adopted Design for Development for the Exposition Light Rail Station Area, the Agency will consider the Exposition Light Rail project in a separate meeting.

DISCUSSION

The Exposition Light Rail Transit (LRT) is a 9.6 mile, eight station project. The alignment generally follows the abandoned Exposition Rail Right-of Way from Downtown Los Angeles to the interim western terminus in Culver City.

Back in April 2001, Metro published the Draft EIR/EIS which considered a range of alternatives for the Exposition Corridor and Wilshire Corridor. The alternatives evaluated in the 2001 Draft EIR/EIS included:

- Alt. 1, 1a, and 1b: Wilshire Corridor Bus Alternatives
- Alt. 2: Busway - Full Length from Downtown LA to Santa Monica
- Alt 2a: Busway - Shortened Length from Downtown LA to Culver City
- Alt 3: Light Rail - Full Length from Downtown LA to Santa Monica
- Alt. 3a: Light Rail – Shortened Length from Downtown LA to Culver City

In June 2001, the Metro Board considered all the alternatives for the Exposition Corridor and selected what is referred to in the EIR as the "Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)". The LPA is the alternative (Alt. 3a listed above) which takes light rail versus busway to a shortened length of the Exposition Corridor (from Downtown Los Angeles to Culver City instead of the full length to Santa Monica).

Thus, the analysis found in the Final EIR evaluates solely the Light Rail Transit for the Exposition Corridor to the shortened length to Culver City (the Wilshire Corridor project was evaluated in a separate environmental document).

Based on the LPA, the Final EIR considers five design options for the terminus station at Venice and Robertson Boulevards. Four of the proposed options feature at-grade stations that would occur on the east side of the Washington and National Boulevard intersection. The fifth option would grade separate the LRT track-way from the Washington and National Boulevard intersection and construct an aerial

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station at the same site considered for the LPA Venice/Robertson Station. The Venice/Robertson Design Options consist of the following:

1. Right-of-Way (ROW) Design Option
2. North of ROW Design Option A
3. North of ROW Design Option B
4. North of ROW Design Option C
5. Aerial Station Design Option

Based on the compressed timeframe for distribution and review of this document, no detailed analysis or comments are provided with this staff report. Detailed comments will be presented at the 2nd meeting on November 21, 2005. For now, below are listed some *preliminary and initial* issues that staff has identified and will be reviewing and evaluating in the Final EIR:

Land Use

- Review of consistency and compliance with the Culver City Redevelopment Agency's Design for Development for the Exposition Light Rail Station Area and City's General Plan.
- Evaluate the impact to adjacent residential neighborhoods near National Blvd from the proposed operation of the light rail line and assess the provision of adequate mitigation measures.

Final EIR/EIS Content and Structure

- Determine if a comprehensive analysis of impacts of the all new design options within the Final EIR were conducted.

Ridership

- Assess and evaluate "ridership" information. Patronage forecasts determine where ridership is coming from and how (mode of travel) ridership is getting to the light rail station. This information is necessary to evaluate traffic, parking and pedestrian issues related to the station.

Local Traffic Circulation

Evaluate the analysis of local traffic circulation and how vehicles will circulate into and out of the station area.

- Location and operation of passenger drop off area.

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- Level of Service (LOS) assumptions and calculations.
- Adequacy and feasibility of proposed mitigation measures.
- Impact to traffic movements and signal timing at the major intersections.
- Mode-split estimates.

Parking

Assess the adequacy of parking supply and accessibility and local traffic circulation into and out of the parking and station areas.

- Operation and location of parking areas.
- Egress and Ingress of parking areas by both vehicles and pedestrians.
- Spillover parking into residential neighborhoods.
- Consideration of the impacts associated with multiple lot operation on local circulation within the traffic study.

Pedestrian Circulation

- Review if direct, safe and convenient access for pedestrians between the station and parking areas are provided.
- Review whether sufficient sidewalk capacity will be provided if the parking lots are remote (off site) from the station.

Transit

- Review accommodation of fixed route transit services in the LRT station area.

General Traffic

- Assess the thoroughness of the traffic analysis and conformance with recent studies prepared in Culver City and the surrounding area.

Rail Operations

- Effects of single track operation during the construction of the future extension of the light rail into Santa Monica (Phase II).

Noise and Vibration

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- Assess the specific ground borne vibration mitigation measures that Metro is planning to implement for the portion of rail line between Jefferson and Washington along the north side of National.
- Review the type of material to be used in constructing sound walls, acoustically absorptive barrier walls or standard masonry block walls.
- Review the assumptions used in determining appropriate noise and vibration mitigations.

Safety and Security

- Evaluate the impact of the various design options on the ability of Culver City Police and Fire Departments to respond to emergency calls east of National Blvd.

Staff will develop more detailed comments as review of the Final EIR continues. The detailed comments will also incorporate concerns of the public and the Council/Agency that are expressed at the meeting on October 24, 2005 as directed by the Council/Agency.

MOTION:

That the City Council and Redevelopment Agency:

Discuss the October 2005 Final Environmental Impact Report for the Proposed Exposition Light Rail Transit Project and provide direction to staff.