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# Los Angeles City Council



**BERNARD C. PARKS**

Councilmember, Eighth District

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October 26, 2009

Mr. Ara Najarian  
Chairman, Board of Directors  
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
One Gateway Plaza  
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952

Attn: Mr. Arthur Leahy  
Mr. Roderick Diaz

Dear Mr. Najarian:

I would first like to congratulate you and your team for your accomplishments on the Crenshaw Transportation Corridor Project thus far. Bringing this incredibly important project to this point in the process is no small feat. I am very excited about the potential for positive impact that this project can bring to the residents of the Eighth District and the Crenshaw Corridor community. Since being elected Councilmember I have prioritized my goals of promoting regional transportation, promoting job creation, improving access to jobs and to spurring economic development within the Eighth District. I believe this project has the potential to accomplish that list of important goals and that is why this project is so critical to the residents of South Los Angeles.

Today is the deadline for comments and responses on the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (LACMTA) Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIS/DEIR) for the initial construction phase of the Crenshaw Transit Corridor Project. A very important part of this project goes through the heart of the Eighth Council District, the Crenshaw District. Over the

past several weeks, my staff has worked with the affected departments within the City of Los Angeles; namely the Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Department of City Planning, the Los Angeles Department of Transportation and the Los Angeles Environmental Affairs Department, to clarify our thoughts and concerns on this project. Attached to this letter are their comments within their respective areas of concern and authority as they have been sent to the LACMTA Project Manager, Roderick Diaz.

What I believe emerges as a common thread of the concern is that we are at a critical juncture as we struggle to reconcile our desire to quickly build a regional rail transit system, which is an essential ingredient for the future prosperity and sustainability of our region, with the equally strong desire for truly livable, sustainable neighborhoods. However, no mode of transportation has been perfected to the point that its promise can't be negated by short-sighted design-related decisions. Because we are physically able to build a transit line in a seemingly expedient manner does not mean that we will be best served by expedient decision-making within that process. Ultimately, the success of our transportation investments will be judged not just on how fast, frequent and safely the trains run, but how successful we are in harnessing the benefits of this transportation system for the posterity of the communities that they serve.

The attached comments, from the affected departments within the City of Los Angeles, as well as my comments on the Crenshaw Transit Corridor project are directing LACMTA towards a level of system design and responsiveness to land use, development, safety concerns and community vision that was not fully anticipated in the Long Range Transportation Plan and the provisions of Measure R. I truly appreciate how this makes LACMTA's job even more difficult than it already is. But I believe that there are fundamentally valid concerns raised in these comments and I would urge the LACMTA Board and management to use this as an occasion to begin an important dialogue on how to better understand and respond to the mission that we have ahead of us, which is to improve our regional transportation capabilities.

Based on a review of the DEIS/DEIR my comments are as follows:

#### Mode

- Of the four alternatives being considered I believe that the Light Rail Transit (LRT) alternative is the most meaningful method of achieving the goal of an integrated, effective mass transit system along the Crenshaw Corridor. None of the other alternatives being considered achieve this goal.

### Grade Separation

- I strongly believe that the Crenshaw Corridor community voice needs to be heard and the LRT mode needs to be constructed below-grade to the greatest extent possible within the Crenshaw Corridor. As has been illustrated on previous LRT lines built within Los Angeles, such as the Gold Line through Boyle Heights, the need to go below-grade is demonstrated by the commercial and residential activity above-grade.
- I firmly believe that option #6 needs to be implemented and the connection at Exposition and Crenshaw needs to be constructed below-grade. Any above-grade connection will have a detrimental affect on vehicular and pedestrian traffic as well as future economic development of that intersection, including the proposed District Square development. I also believe that an above grade LRT connection would have a negative visual affect for both community residents and for any future economic development.
- I strongly believe that option #4 needs to be implemented and a below-grade alignment needs to be constructed through the Hyde Park community through to the Harbor Subdivision. I am opposed to any aerial or at-grade LRT alignment within Hyde Park as the visual, noise, lighting and land use impacts will have a severely negative impact to the adjacent low-scale neighborhoods within this portion of the Crenshaw Corridor.

### Station Area Planning

- Option #5 needs to be implemented and the inclusion of a below-grade station stop at Leimert Park near Vernon Ave needs to be constructed. As community residents know, Leimert Park is considered the center of the African-American arts scene in Los Angeles. Without an accompanying station stop at Leimert Park, which matches and reinforces the unique character of the surrounding neighborhood, this cultural destination point will be severely impacted. This station would also be critical to serving the high-density, residential communities of Leimert Park, Hyde Park, View Park and Baldwin Hills.
- I believe that the station stop planned near Florence Ave. and West Blvd. needs to be adjusted and shifted east closer to Crenshaw Blvd. As a destination point, Crenshaw Blvd. is an optimal location in comparison to West Blvd.
- Station development at all station stops along the Crenshaw Corridor need to provide the following: seasonal coverage, comfort for passengers, accommodations that support all public transit riders, as well as the inclusion of visual elements that capture the essence of the surrounding communities.
- The development of a Metro service center at a central location along the alignment, which includes services and informational materials to meet the needs of transit riders, needs to be included in the design and implemented.
- The development of a Metro Police 'Drop-In' Center at a central location along the alignment to meet the security needs of transit riders needs to be included in the

design and implemented.

#### Parking

- The construction of parking facilities and/or appropriate parking accommodations along the Crenshaw Transportation Corridor needs to be included in the design and implemented. Specific emphasis should be given to major east/west transportation corridors, such as Exposition Blvd., Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Vernon Ave., Slauson Ave. and Florence Ave. Specific emphasis should also be given to developing park and ride facilities to accommodate single-modal ridership.
- The development of a parking-loss mitigation plan needs to be incorporated into design and implemented. Parking loss at any location along the corridor will have severe impacts on the adjacent business and residential communities.

#### Construction Standards

- The inclusion of local hiring provisions for construction of the project needs to be incorporated into the project and implemented.
- Compliance with all Federal Transportation Agency construction standards needs to be incorporated into the project and implemented.

#### Design Elements

- Consideration of future economic development and mixed-use projects along the Transit Corridor, which meets or exceeds what was provided for the Metro Gold Line in Pasadena, needs to be incorporated into the design and implemented.
- Where appropriate along the at-grade portions of the alignment, specifically adjacent to the Harbor Subdivision portion of the alignment, the following elements need to be incorporated into the design and implemented:
  - The inclusion of landscaping treatment that meets or exceeds what was provided along the Metro Orange Line in the San Fernando Valley.
  - A bike lane and bicycle facilities that are user-friendly and compatible with the surrounding communities.
  - The installation of sound walls of a sufficient height to reduce noise from the project in the immediate and surrounding communities and that eliminate two-way negative visual.
  - Special safety mitigation near school crossings.

In conclusion, it is critical that the Los Angeles City Council as a whole include a policy position relative to the light rail transit project design options that reflect the needs and concerns of the surrounding communities. With the support of Councilmember Bill Rosendahl, I will be asking the City Council to vote on a unified policy position during Wednesday's Council meeting. As Metro staff has informally agreed to consider additional comments relative to an official City position on policy issues up until Friday,

October 30, 2009, I believe that this City Council policy vote will be incorporated into the City's comments as part of the City's response to the DEIR/DEIS. I encourage you to join me in supporting the needs of the community and design elements that I have outlined above. Its completion will help to meet the transportation, job-creation and economic development goals and objectives for the Eighth Council District. Please direct your staff to contact Dennis Rodriguez, my Economic Development Deputy, at (213) 473-7008 or via e-mail at [Dennis.Rodriguez@lacity.org](mailto:Dennis.Rodriguez@lacity.org) if there are any questions.

Respectfully,



BERNARD C. PARKS  
Councilmember

Attachments: Community Redevelopment Agency/Los Angeles Comments  
Los Angeles Environmental Affairs Department Comments  
Los Angeles Department of Transportation Comments  
Los Angeles Department of City Planning Comments

Cc: Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa  
Councilmember Herb Wesson, Council District 10  
Councilmember Bill Rosendahl, Chair, Transportation Committee  
Gail Goldberg, Director, Department of City Planning  
Rita Robinson, General Manager, Department of Transportation  
Dietrich Allen, General Manager, Environmental Affairs Department  
Cecilia Estolano, Chief Executive Officer Community Redevelopment Agency  
Jaime de la Vega, Deputy Mayor for Transportation  
Congresswoman Diane Watson, 33<sup>rd</sup> District  
Congresswoman Maxine Waters, 35<sup>th</sup> District  
Congresswoman Jane Harmon, 36<sup>th</sup> District  
Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard, 34<sup>th</sup> District  
Congresswoman Linda Sanchez, 39<sup>th</sup> District  
Congresswoman Grace Napolitano, 38<sup>th</sup> District  
Congressman Adam Schiff, 29<sup>th</sup> District  
Congresswoman Judy Chu, 32<sup>nd</sup> District  
Congressman Gary Miller, 42<sup>nd</sup> District  
Congressman David Drier, 26<sup>th</sup> District  
Congressman Jerry Lewis, 41<sup>st</sup> District  
Congressman Joe Baca, 43<sup>rd</sup> District  
Congresswoman Mary Bono Mack, 45<sup>th</sup> District  
Congressman Ken Calvert, 44<sup>th</sup> District  
State Assemblywoman Karen Bass, 47<sup>th</sup> District  
State Assemblyman Ted Lieu, 53<sup>rd</sup> District  
State Assemblyman Steven Bradford, 51<sup>st</sup> District

State Senator Curran Price, 26<sup>th</sup> District  
State Senator Rod Wright, 25<sup>th</sup> District  
State Senator Jenny Oropeza, 28<sup>th</sup> District  
County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Second District  
Hassan Ikhata, Executive Director, SCAG  
Jackie Bacharach, Executive Director, South Bay Council of Governments

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