



HERB J. WESSON, JR.
COUNCILMEMBER, 10TH DISTRICT

October 26, 2009

Roderick Diaz, Project Manager
Los Angeles County Metropolitan
Transportation Authority
One Gateway Plaza
Mail Stop: 99-22-3
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952

Dear Mr. Diaz:

Re: Crenshaw Transit Corridor Draft EIS/EIR Comments

As a Councilmember representing a portion of the proposed Crenshaw Transit Corridor (Martin Luther King Blvd. to Exposition), I take great interest in how the Corridor would be configured. After reviewing the draft Crenshaw Transit Corridor (CTC) EIS/EIR, **I strongly urge that the Base LRT Alternative be constructed below-grade at all points along Crenshaw Boulevard (between Exposition Boulevard and the Harbor Subdivision Right-of-Way). In addition, I support the adoption of the Crenshaw Transit Corridor Light Rail Alternative Connection to the Exposition Light Rail, ensuring a grade separation at the intersection of the two lines.** These would allow us to minimize disruption of Crenshaw Boulevard and the lives of the people I represent; preserve the Crenshaw economic revitalization projects currently underway; and provide for a Crenshaw public transportation system that would connect with the Expo Line.

Crenshaw Boulevard is one of the major corridors in the City of Los Angeles and considered a gateway to the religious, cultural and historical core of South Los Angeles. As such, any disruption of Crenshaw would have wide repercussions to the community as a whole. Based on our experience with the Expo Line – on which Construction Authority I serve as Chair – constructing an at-grade or above-grade light rail line along Crenshaw Boulevard would cause significant construction, visual, environmental and community problems. The problems currently facing the Expo Line would be magnified not only because Crenshaw is a much more heavily traveled street than Exposition Boulevard but also because it holds great significance to the people in South Los Angeles. These impacts would not only be felt during construction, but would also reverberate throughout the communities in the area for decades to come.

Building the CTC at-grade or above-grade would also disrupt the economic revitalization programs currently underway on Crenshaw Boulevard. As a Councilmember, I have made it a priority to revitalize Crenshaw Boulevard. At my request, the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) adopted the Mid-City Crenshaw Vision and Implementation Plan – developed

with the community and approved by the City Council in February 2009 – a master plan for the redevelopment of Crenshaw Boulevard. Implementation of the Plan is now in progress. In fact, the CRA recently received over \$14 million in Prop C funding from the state for infrastructure improvements along Crenshaw Boulevard as called for by the Plan. While the Crenshaw Vision Plan recognizes the importance of the Crenshaw stop of the Expo Line and potentially the presence of the CTC, it does not envision an at-grade or above-grade CTC. An at-grade or above-grade CTC would be inconsistent with the Vision Plan and disrupt our long-term efforts to revitalize Crenshaw Boulevard.


Moreover, if the CTC were to be built at-grade, it would severely and negatively affect a 7-acre development project currently in the final planning stages at Crenshaw Boulevard and Rodeo Road called District Square, which is set to start construction in 2010. Investment in South Los Angeles is very hard to attract. Over the past four years my office has worked very hard to attract development to this area so that my constituents could have access to quality goods and services. District Square is one of the few developments actually making progress in South Los Angeles, which is why it is one of the catalytic economic development projects included in the Mayor's South LA Initiative. An at-grade construction of the CTC would mean that District Square would lose a significant portion of its acreage, undoing all the work that has been done over the past four years and depriving this community of quality retail and business services.

Finally, in supporting a below-grade construction of the CTC from Exposition Boulevard to the Harbor Subdivision Right-of-Way, the only configuration that would make sense at the intersection of the Expo Line and the CTC would be grade separated stations with the Expo Line station at-grade and the CTC station below-grade. As stated in the Draft EIS/EIR, "Grade separation of the crossing between the two lines would reduce traffic flow considerations and eliminate the expense of the platform rebuild. The only viable grade separation would be to bring the Crenshaw LRT underground at Exposition."

For these reasons, it is important that the Base LRT Alternative be constructed below-grade at all points along Crenshaw Boulevard; and the Alternative Connection to the Exposition Light Rail be adopted.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact myself or my Senior Deputy, Andrew J. Westall, at (213) 473-7010.

Sincerely,


HERB J. WESSON, JR.
Councilmember, 10th District

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