June 18, 2014

Robert Cálix
Transportation Planning Manager
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Countywide Planning and Development
One Gateway Plaza
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952

Subject: Draft Short Range Transportation Plan – LADOT Comments

Dear Mr. Cálix:

The City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation (LADOT) appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the draft 2014 Short Range Transportation Plan (SRTP). The SRTP provides a helpful summary of the programs and projects that are expected to be delivered in the next ten years and defines how the region is advancing toward the transportation goals identified in the Metro 2009 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The SRTP also provides an analysis of available financial resources and proposes action plans for further and future investments. LADOT fully supports the goals of the SRTP and the need to develop an action plan and funding strategy that strives to achieve the goals of the Metro LRTP and of the SCAG Regional Transportation Plan / Sustainable Communities Strategy. LADOT offers the following comments:

GENERAL COMMENTS

1. Common Priorities

LADOT appreciates and fully supports Metro’s policies relative to transportation sustainability. According to the draft SRTP, the Metro Countywide Sustainability Planning Policy includes three key priorities: connect people and places, create community value and conserve resources. Mayor Eric Garcetti has also established a renewed focus within the City of Los Angeles on long-term sustainability. This includes a focus on performance toward priority outcomes for the City defined by four key pillars: a safe city, a prosperous city, a livable and sustainable city and a well-run city government. To pursue and deliver these mutual goals, ongoing collaboration between the City and Metro is essential.
2. Funding
The allocation of future funding should be better aligned with City, County and State goals and policies relative to complete streets, sustainability, first/last mile solutions and active transportation. The SRTP should provide more insight on how investments for multi-modal transportation solutions can be better defined in Metro's future funding strategies. With the programmed expansion of the Metro Rail system expected to include an additional 32 miles of track, funding programs should encourage projects that connect more people to existing and future stations through first/last mile bicycle and pedestrian connections and LADOT DASH shuttle bus routes. Of all the trips made in the City of Los Angeles, almost 50% are less than three miles in length, yet approximately 85% of these trips are made by car. Focusing more future funding on active transportation connections and local circulators can significantly reduce congestion, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and have the added benefit of expanding the reach of the public transit system.

3. City of Los Angeles Mobility Plan 2035
Led by the Department of City Planning, the City is currently updating the Mobility Element of the General Plan. The updated Mobility Element (also known as Mobility Plan 2035) is currently progressing through the City's approval process. The plan would establish new Complete Street standards, defines new enhanced modal networks and lays the policy foundation necessary for the City to plan, design, and operate streets that consider a more balanced system. The Mobility Element would also promote more first/last mile connections and the use of technology and wayfinding to expand the use and awareness of multi-modal options. The goals and improvements identified in the Mobility Plan 2035 are consistent with Metro’s policies and programs and should favor well in future funding allocations.

4. Integrated Mobility Hubs
In listing the various projects to be implemented in the next ten years, the SRTP should also highlight the Integrated Mobility Hubs program. This is an example of an innovative project that can expand the reach of Metro's transit services and that is consistent with the recommendations of the Metro First / Last Mile Strategic Plan. Metro has been a valuable partner to the City in the planning and initial design of this program. The City recommends that these types of services be planned for all existing and future Metro rail stations. The following provides an overview of this project:

The cities of Long Beach and Los Angeles were awarded grants funds from the 2010 Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) program to implement the Integrated Mobility Hubs program. Serving as an extension of the transit network, this project would provide “on-demand” transportation through the integration of first mile/last mile mobility options. The program would provide secure bicycle parking, bicycle sharing, and car sharing at strategic locations. The JARC grant would fund the installation of hubs at highly visible and conveniently located venues within Downtown Los Angeles, Hollywood and Long Beach. The hubs will be located in highly densified urban areas with large population of under-represented lower-income individuals, with robust public transit systems, and with high job/job training densities. Providing these mobility options will enhance the integration and connectivity of the Los Angeles transportation system, while reducing the
dependency on automobiles, traffic congestion, vehicle emissions, and the demand for parking. The City anticipates installation of the first Mobility Hubs by 2016.

5. Enhanced Linkages
LADOT recommends that Metro develop pedestrian safety and connectivity standards when developing blueprints for planned rail stations. To improve the connectivity to these stations, curb ramps, lighting, wayfinding signage, traffic signals, crosswalks, etc. should all be evaluated and any missing elements should be included in the design and construction of stations. This is also recommended when retrofitting existing stations. Such features would enhance pedestrian safety and environment and should be given top priority when designing and constructing stations.

6. Station Parking
To further explore connectivity enhancements, Metro should estimate the potential increase in transit riders that can result from providing increased parking supply at existing and future stations. For example, how many more riders can be introduced to the transit system if Metro constructed additional park-and-ride lots? Such an evaluation can help assess if conveniently located station parking could expand the number of transit users by including residents that are not currently within a short walk or bicycle ride of a station.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

- On page 5 of the draft SRTP, the “coordinated blueprint for transportation” should also mention the importance of implementing bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

- Also on page 5, the “grow LA County greener” discussion should stress the importance of implementing active transportation projects.

- On page 6 (What’s on our list?), there should be some discussion on the significant increase in bikeway infrastructure that has been implemented since the 2009 LRTP was adopted and how the bikeway network will be expanded in the near future.

- The Los Angeles River Bike Path and the committed funding for this project should be illustrated in the SRTP’s maps of future projects and listed in the funding tables.

- The recommended plan of future projects should include the build out of the Los Angeles River Bike Path and increased funds for this project should be recommended.

- On page 19, LADOT recommends that the discussion on first/last mile strategies be revised as follows: “We are developing a First/Last Mile Strategic Plan to increase the reach of our transit system and are identifying funding for such improvements.”
• On page 20, the funds identified for bicycle and pedestrian linkages is inadequate to build out a network that complies with AB 32 (California Global Warming Solutions Act), SB 375 (Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act), and AB 1358 (Complete Streets Act).

LADOT appreciates Metro’s leadership in planning for a sustainable transportation system. Clearly, the City’s goals are well aligned with Metro’s objectives to develop a better integrated and balanced multi-modal transportation network. LADOT looks forward to working collaboratively with Metro to pursue this vision.

Sincerely,

Tomas Carranza
Senior Transportation Engineer

Attachment

c:    Nat Gale, Office of the Mayor
     Claire Bowin, Department of City Planning
     Dan Mitchell, LADOT
     James Lefton, LADOT
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